

## ***Hope for 2021 and the Love of God*** By Shemaiah Gonzalez

What is your hope for 2021?

Maybe it is that life will go back to normal. Maybe your hope is to return to an “in-person” life. Maybe your hope is for a boring news cycle. Is your hope for community? Or to not just survive, but thrive?

Hope is the underlining feeling of expectation or desire for certain things to happen. As Catholics we have this hope because of Christ.

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul reminds the people of Rome where their hope lies. This was a community of Jews who had become Christians. They had been exiled from their homes in Rome by the Emperor Claudius. They were hurting, suffering, and now returning to their old lives in Rome.

St. Paul writes that they could boast in hope, because God has poured his love into our hearts. They could even boast in the afflictions of the last years, “knowing that suffering produces endurance.” (Romans 5:3) Endurance builds character. And character builds hope.

And hope does not disappoint.

These words ring true for us too.

The last year has been tough. Many of us feel battered and bruised, some of us in our bodies, but most of us in our spirits. I imagine this was just a fraction of the pain those first-century Christians felt, so it is not as if St. Paul does not know our pain when he writes. He does.

We too can boast of our afflictions over the last year. We can see how they refined us and how they built our endurance and our character. Not that it did not hurt. It hurt. And yet, we realized just how strong we are. We can boast in hope.

We don't know what this new year will hold.

We hope for healing for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our nation.

St. Paul reaches out from the pages of his letter to comfort us, telling us of what he reminded those first-century Christians, that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

We can imagine all the things we think separate us from the love of God and add them to Paul's list: our fears—of now and the future—our fear of media, of leaders, of ourselves. None of that can separate us from the love of God that has been poured into us through the Holy Spirit.

May we cling to that love.

May it heal us.

*About the author: Shemaiah Gonzalez is a freelance writer who holds a B.A. in English Literature and a M.A. in Intercultural Ministry.*



### **ST. MONICA PARISH**

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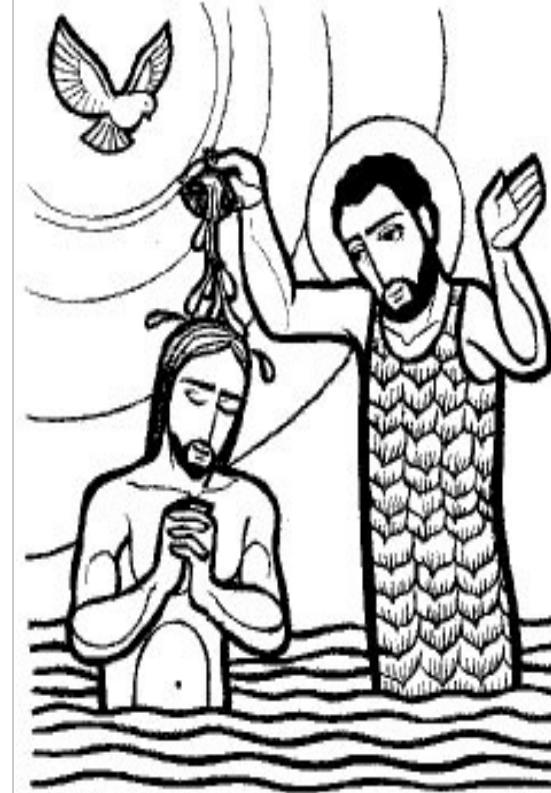
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PASTOR: **Rev. Robert Wong, SJ**

#### **PARISH OFFICE HOURS**

Monday – Friday

**9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm**



January 10, 2021

### **Baptism of the Lord**

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*May our lives always reflect the powerful grace of our baptism.*

God reveals the sacrament of baptism with dynamic power. The heavens are torn. The Spirit descends; the Father's voice is heard. Through our baptism, we are joined to the family of God and welcomed into the intimacy of the Holy Trinity. Take hold of this gift.

#### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

Isaiah presents the Suffering Servant, sent to save God's people. In the Book of Acts, Peter declares salvation is available to all people, and is not restricted to the Israelites. In today's Gospel, Jesus is baptized by John. The heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, while God the Father calls Jesus his *beloved Son*.

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#### **Today's Readings:**

*1st: Isaiah 55.1-11 or Isaiah 42.1-4, 6-7*

*Psalm: Isaiah 12 or Psalm 29*

*2nd: 1 John 5.1-9 or Acts 10.34-38*

*Gospel: Mark 1.7-11*

### 2020 Donation receipts for Parish and Project Advance

THANK YOU for your support and generosity to our parish, St. Monica, and the Archdiocese's Appeal. Your receipts will be readied when we receive the PA receipt from the Chancery. God bless you always.

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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 don't 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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### Sunday Missal 2020 - 2021

We have begun a new liturgical year. 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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### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is from January 18 to 25. The 2021 theme – Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (John 15:5-9) – calls us to pray and to work for reconciliation and unity in the church, with our human family, and with all of creation. Drawing on the Gospel image of vine and branches, it invites us to nourish unity with God and with one another through contemplative silence, prayer, and common action. Grafted into Christ the vine as many diverse branches, may we bear rich fruit and create new ways of living, with respect for and communion with all of creation. Sign-up for daily prayers at [rcav.org/unity](http://rcav.org/unity)

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### Online Safety for Children Webinar

Join us on Tuesday, Jan 26 at 7:00 pm for all parents, grandparents, and teachers regarding how to keep their children safe while online (specific for children in Grades 6 to 12). With COVID-19, our children are at home more, not meeting up with friends and therefore on their devices more and exposed to dangers online. Studies show that the more children are online, the more likely they may become a victim of cyberbullying and sexual offending. This webinar is organized by CoSA (Circle of Support and Accountability), a not-for-profit organization supporting the prevention of sexual crimes. Register online for free at [beholdvancouver.org/events](http://beholdvancouver.org/events)

***John saw Jesus approaching him, and said:  
This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.  
- John 1.29 -***

### A Stewardship Moment

#### Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

On this first weekend after the Feast of the Epiphany, the Gospel reading reminds us of Jesus' baptism. It gives meaning to our own baptism into Christ Jesus. Jesus' baptism is a reminder that he is not only our Lord but also our brother. He was baptized, just as we are. He shares in our humanity. Good stewards recognize that their baptisms call them to conform their daily lives to Jesus' teachings, and to live their lives as Jesus did. Through their baptism, they have been given the necessary gifts to share with others the new creation that Christ brings. The stewardship question is whether we can recognize our own baptismal gifts, and like Jesus, use those gifts to bring the hope of Christ to the lives of others.

### Mass Wedding for Civilly Married Couples

Have your church wedding this summer! If you got married civilly and would now like to have your marriage recognized by the Church there will be a great opportunity to do so again this year on Saturday, February 6 at 1:30 pm at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Surrey. Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB will be celebrating a wedding Mass for a large number of civilly married couples (participants must be both baptized and married only once). You will need a copy of your marriage registration, a recent copy of your baptism certificates and completing some forms. To register or for more information, contact:

Deacon Greg Barcelon at 604-771-2975 or email [filipinoministry@rcav.org](mailto:filipinoministry@rcav.org).

### Into the Deep: Reading *Fratelli Tutti*: Pope Francis' Vision of Fraternity and Social Friendship

Pope Francis' latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* diagnoses the shortcomings of society that have been laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspired by the Gospel and the example of St. Francis of Assisi, Francis invites all to embrace fraternity and social friendship in order to build a more just world. Fr. Nick Meisl and Nick Olkovich will introduce and contextualize the encyclical, highlight important themes and invite participants to reflect on its implications for their Christian living. Join us for this free event on Friday, Jan. 29 from 7:00 - 8:30 pm on Zoom. Register now at [beholdvancouver.org/events](http://beholdvancouver.org/events)

After the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well Pleased.

- Matthew 3.16-17 -

### Mass Intentions Jan 10 - 16, 2021

Mon, Jan 11	-	Eufemia Ragundiaz (+)
Tue, Jan 12	-	Faustino & Pablo Mendoza (+)
Wed, Jan 13	-	Maria Angela Salacup (+)
Thu, Jan 14	-	Edmond Lim (INT)
Fri, Jan 15	-	Ildefonso Puray Jr (+)
Sat, Jan 16	-	Joseph Resing (+)