



December 2016

Saint Cecilia

Catholic Church

Inside

- 1 A Message from our Pastor
- 2 Jesus Is
- 8 Online Media
- 12 Archbishop's Christmas Message



A Message from our Pastor

The Christmas narrative of the birth of Jesus as found in St. Luke's gospel has many depths and layers of meaning and significance both with what preceded the event and with what would come after. For example, the importance of Bethlehem, King David's birthplace connected Jesus with Israel's most beloved king; the appearance of a bright star arising in the east was a standard way of announcing the birth of a great prophet or leader. What is often glossed over are some of the more humble symbols like the fact that the infant Jesus was placed in a manger. We often think of that vessel as a cradle designed specifically for a newborn child. In fact some overly pious artists have sometimes visually depicted it as a beautifully crafted piece of nursing room furniture with struts that afforded rock-ability. In actual fact, a manger was simply a feed box for livestock and was probably constructed from the roughest scrap lumber. The connection of Jesus with food would perhaps have resonated with the early Christian community's remembrance of Jesus's references to himself as the Bread of Life, and other references by which we would be fed by him in the Eucharist. We are not sure if Luke intentionally mentioned the manger with that in mind, but it does give us pause to reflect that this is exactly what Jesus becomes for us. Our very hands become the cradle for the body of Christ each time we approach to receive Him at communion. When we 'cradle' something it indicates that we treat it with respect, reverence and gentleness.



So while the manger may play a very small part of the Christmas story, the ramifications of what it symbolizes are not to be overlooked. God has often used very simple and mundane things to communicate some very profound mysteries.

May we continue to be aware of great things revealed to us under the guise of very ordinary things. By doing that, Christmas will always have a refreshing and deeper message for us all.

Wishing all of you a joyous Christmas and blessed New Year.

Fr. John Weckend

Newsletter brought to you
by your Stewardship Team.

Melita Stenhouse
Team Leader

JesusIs

During Advent, JesusIs videos from Redeemedonline.com were shown as a Post-Communion reflection at Mass.

JesusIs are 1 minute videos that were posted daily on the website with the idea, "All you need is one minute a day to make this Advent amazing." On the site, along with the daily videos, were a Thought, Action and Prayer for the day. Those items are listed here; use them as a guide for daily meditation and reflection in any season.

JesusIs Messy

Thought - Jesus is messy because He wants to love you right where you are today. Allow him into your mess.

Action - Take a minute to examine where you haven't let God into your life. Make a simple prayer to invite him into your heart and life in a deeper way.

Prayer - Jesus, thank you for loving me where I am today. I invite you into my heart and my life in a new way. I give you my mess and permission.

JesusIs Controversial

Thought - Jesus was commonly misunderstood and he made a lot of enemies in life and death.

Action - Getting to know Jesus isn't as complicated as it sounds. Schedule out this week and set aside 5 minutes each day to talk with Jesus and invite him into your day and life.

Prayer - Jesus, I want to know you. Help me to know who you really are and to love others in the way that you do.

JesusIs Joyful

Thought - Jesus came that you might have life and have it to the full (John 10:10.) He is joyful and wants you to experience His joy.

Action - Identify an area of your life you need more joy (work, school, your family, etc.). Ask God to bring His joy to the darkest situations in your life and in your heart.

Prayer - Jesus, you are joyful. Bring your joy to my hurt, to my family, to my friends and to my heart. Help me to be joyful as I focus on you.

JesusIs Miraculous

Thought - "We modern people think of miracles as the suspension of the natural order, but Jesus meant them to be the restoration of the natural order. The Bible tells us that God did not originally make the world to have disease, hunger and death in it. Jesus has come to redeem where it is wrong and heal the world where it is broken. His miracles are not just proofs that He has power but also wonderful foretastes of what He is going to do with that power. Jesus' miracles are not just a challenge to our minds, but a promise to our hearts, that the world we all want is coming." -Tim Keller

Action - Examine your week so far. How is your prayer life? Where are things going well for you spiritually? What needs

improvement? Make some small changes to refocus on Jesus.

Prayer - Jesus, what you are able to do is beyond my imagination. Help me to know your love today. I give you permission to work miracles in my life, especially in my heart. Make me new. Heal my brokenness.

JesusIs Love

Thought - You are loved perfectly by God. There's nothing you can do to make God love you more. There's nothing you can do to make God love you less. He loves you precisely because you are you.

Action - Think of 3 ways you have experienced God's love the past couple of weeks. Write them down in a journal or somewhere else. Thank him for His love.

Prayer - Jesus, let me know your love in the deepest parts of my heart and my life. Your Sacred Heart beats for me. Please help me to know this reality in my everyday life.

JesusIs Jewish

Thought - Jesus came in a particular time and place. Understanding a little bit about Jesus's culture gives a better picture of who He is.

Action - Consider why the disciples of Jesus left everything to be a disciple. It was an honour to be invited to follow the rabbi, "the teacher." Is there something you maybe need to leave behind to follow Jesus?

Prayer - Jesus, help me to understand you. Help me to learn more about you and to grow closer to you in prayer that I, like the disciples, may leave everything to follow you.

JesusIs Scandalous

Thought - People are scandalized by who Jesus spends time with. "Jesus didn't care about the scandal. He cared about the scandalous." – Judah Smith. He came to seek and save the lost.

Action - Remember your need for God. Often when Jesus encounters people in the gospel stories, He asks them, "What do you want me to do for you?" Answer him today.

Prayer - Jesus, the ultimate scandal is that you died on the cross. Help me to surrender to you. I give you the scandalous parts of my heart. Help me to love like you and to love those on the margins of the community I live in.

JesusIs Real

Thought - Jesus may sometimes seem too good to be true, but He is real. He's not a myth or a cartoon character. His love for you is the greatest reality you can ever experience.

Action - Ask God for His help to see the reality of His love for you. It's all around us, but sometimes we are blind to it.

Prayer - Jesus, help me to be more real and to allow you into every part of my life today. I know I can't really hide from you, but I try

anyways. I give you today. Help me to be a real instrument of your love to others as well.

JesusIs Weak

Thought - "Love makes strength. The 'weakness' of Christ in obeying the Father made him strong because it was the obedience of love. Had Christ disobeyed the Father's will...he would have lost his strength. His obedience was a mark of His divinity. And we too: if we obey the Father completely, we are transformed into participants in the divine nature. For repentance, faith and baptism, the three instruments of that transformation, are all forms of obedience. We are commanded to repent, believe, and be baptized." Dr. Peter Kreeft

Action - Allow God to transform your weakness into strength by first examining where you are weak. Ask God to transform those parts of your life and on your part try to surrender to him.

Prayer - Jesus, it is amazing to me that you allowed yourself to be weak that I might be strong. You beautifully transform weakness to strength. I surrender my weakness to you and give you my life today.

JesusIs Understanding

Thought - You are never alone. Jesus is here with you today, as He was yesterday. He will also be there tomorrow. Jesus isn't just present, but He truly understands. He's gone through it all.

Action - Take a few extra minutes of prayer time today.

Prayer - Jesus, thank you for knowing me, loving me, and understanding me. Help me to grow in holiness. Help me to respond to your call for me.

JesusIs Exciting

Thought - God is more amazing and exciting than you realize, and He invites you to share in His divine life. If you aren't excited for today yet, it's time to get excited!

Action - Does your relationship with Jesus lack excitement? Invite him today to amaze you. Take a moment to think about a time when you first encountered the love of Jesus in a real way.

Prayer - Jesus, you are bigger and better than even what I can imagine. Help me to know that. I give you my heart and my life. Fill me with your life.

JesusIs Divine

Thought - Jesus is divine. He reveals to us who God is. He is the full revelation of who God is to us, because He is fully God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1.

Action - Take a couple of minutes to examine your week. Where do you need to invite God into your life in a greater way today?

Prayer - Father, thank you for sending your Son. I am amazed by your love for me. Help me to know you. Help me to grow in my relationship with you today.

JesusIs Forgiving

Thought - "Jesus' attitude is striking: we do not hear the words of scorn, we do not hear words of condemnation, but only words of love, of mercy, which are an invitation to conversation. "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again." Ah! Brothers and Sisters, God's face is the face of a merciful father who is always patient. Have you thought about God's patience, the patience He has with each one of us? That is His mercy. He always has patience, patience with us, He understands us, He waits for us, He does not tire of forgiving us if we are able to return to Him with a contrite heart. "Great is God's mercy," says the Psalm." - Pope Francis

Action - Allow yourself to experience God's forgiveness. Take some time to examine your conscience and pray. Get to Confession if you need to.

Prayer - Jesus, thank you for the cross. Let your mercy heal my heart. Lord, I have sinned. I have turned away. I am sorry. Give me the grace to start over in you.

JesusIs Unrelenting

Thought - "The great thing to remember is that, though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever

cost to us, at whatever cost to Him."

– C.S. Lewis

Action - Make time to read the Bible today. If you are already doing this, spend a little extra time praying about what you read.

Prayer - Jesus, thank you for faithfully seeking me out. You are unrelenting in your pursuit of me despite my unfaithfulness. Thank you for your love. Help me to be an instrument of that love today.

JesusIs Listening

Thought - The fact that Jesus is listening isn't a threat to us, but it's quite the opposite. We have a God who longs to listen to us. Don't hold back from him.

Action - Make your prayer as honest as possible. Tell Jesus the joys of your heart. Tell him your pain. Make your prayer real today.

Prayer - Jesus, here is what is on my heart this very moment (take 5 minutes to tell him).

JesusIs Mercy

Thought - "I am always struck when I reread the parable of the merciful Father. ... The Father, with patience, love, hope and mercy, had never for a second stopped thinking about his wayward son, and as soon as he sees him still far off, he runs out to meet him and embraces him with tenderness, the tenderness of God, without a word of reproach. ... God is always waiting for us, He never grows tired. Jesus shows us this merciful patience of God so that we can

regain confidence and hope – always!”
– Pope Francis

Action - Break away from your normal routine to rest a bit more in prayer and spend time with the people in your life.

Prayer - God, thank you for your gift of mercy. I try so hard sometimes to earn what I can't ever deserve. You give so freely. Help me to actively receive your mercy and love into my life.

JesusIs Life

Thought - I have witnessed that the people who are the most focused and bold in living out their relationship with Jesus are never bored. To live for Jesus is the greatest of all adventures.

Action - Consider what it might look like to take a risk in following Jesus. Is there something God's been putting on your heart and asking you to do?

Prayer - Jesus, you are life. I give you my life. Help me to live for you and to give you every part of my day today. Bring me life and help me to share that life with others.

JesusIs Manly

Thought - When Jesus has been beaten, Pilate says to the crowd, "Behold the man." In Jesus we see who God is, but we also see who we are called to be. Look to the cross today and ask God who He is and who you are.

Action - Take some time to think about what it means for you to be holy.

Prayer - Jesus, you knew your mission and nothing kept you from that. Help me today be the person you have called me to be. Help me today to be like you. I love you.

JesusIs Son of Mary

Thought - "We never give more honor to Jesus than when we honor His Mother, and we honor her simply and solely to honor him all the more perfectly. We go to her only as a way leading to the goal we seek – Jesus, her Son." - St. Louis de Montfort

Action - Think about Mary's virtues (list compiled by St. Louis de Montfort) and try to focus on one or two you would like to work on: ardent charity, profound humility, universal mortification, constant mental prayer, blind obedience, divine wisdom, surpassing purity, angelic sweetness, lively faith, and heroic patience.

Prayer - Mary, pray for me that I might know your Son more. Intercede for me and my loved ones that we might, like you, welcome him into our lives in a new way. Amen. Say a Hail Mary today.

JesusIs Freedom

Thought - "Do not be afraid to be saints. Follow Jesus Christ who is the source of freedom and light. Be open to the Lord so that He may lighten all your ways."
– St. John Paul II

Action - Take some time to consider what is keeping you from being completely free in Jesus. Surrender that to Jesus.

Prayer - Jesus, in you we find real freedom. Many times in my life, I believe the lie that I can never find real freedom. Remind me today that you have set us free. Let me taste and know your freedom.

JesusIs Personal

Thought - God is not distant. He is close to us and desires a personal relationship with you – that’s awesome news!

Action - Get to church a few minutes early or stay a few minutes extra to pray in silence.

Prayer - Jesus, thank you that you personally love me. I want to grow in a real relationship with you. I give you my heart, my mind, my soul, and all that I am. I love you. Thank you for your love.

JesusIs Surprising

Thought - Some days or some things that happen can send us into a frantic tailspin. The best thing we can do is to slow down and experience the love of Christ.

Action - Break away from your normal routine to slow down your mind and heart to focus on Jesus this week.

Prayer - Jesus, help me to make this week focused on you. I love you and want to draw closer to you. Help me to bring others to you.

JesusIs Epic

Thought - “It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.” - St. John Paul II

Action - Take a risk in your relationship with God. Invite him into your life in a deeper way. What is God calling you to do? Don’t wait. Do it today.

Prayer - Jesus, thank you for inviting me to share in your life. I surrender to you. I give up control. Help me to see how you are calling me to follow you and be more like you. Today is yours.

JesusIs Truth

Thought - Truth matters. Jesus is truth yesterday, today and forever. He is who He said He was and continues to be that truth today.

Action - Be a truthful person in that your actions line up with what you believe.

Prayer - Jesus, you are truth. I want to know you. I want to know you as the fullness of truth. Help me to know you, to love you and to serve you.

JesusIs Hope

Thought - “Wait upon the Lord; be faithful to His commandments; He will elevate your

hope, and put you in possession of His Kingdom. Wait upon Him patiently; wait upon Him by avoiding all sin. He will come, doubt it not; and in the approaching day of His visitation, which will be that of your death and His judgment, He will Himself crown your holy hope. Place all your hope in the Heart of Jesus; it is a safe asylum; for he who trusts in God is sheltered and protected by His mercy. To this firm hope, join the practice of virtue, and even in this life you will begin to taste the ineffable joys of Paradise.” - St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Action - Hope in Jesus never disappoints. Whatever situations in your life seem hopeless, surrender them to Jesus. He is hope.

Prayer - Jesus, you are my hope. Help me to trust in both good times and difficult situations in your unfailing love and goodness. I love you. Help me receive you into my heart.

JesusIs Alive

Thought - God is not dead. He is alive. Do you experience this in your everyday life? Jesus wants to be close to you today.

Action - Take time to prepare your heart for Jesus. What do you need to do? Spend some more time in prayer? Get to confession?

Prayer - Jesus, be alive in me today. Enliven the parts of my heart that feel dead. Heal me. Forgive me. Let me know your love in a deep new way. Say a Hail Mary today.

JesusIs Not Safe

Thought - “People who are obsessed with Jesus aren’t consumed with their personal safety and comfort above all else. Obsessed people care more about God’s kingdom coming to this earth than their own lives being shielded from pain or distress.”

- Francis Chan

Action - Say a rosary today for your family.

Prayer - Jesus, I so often choose the easy way. Help me to choose you over my comfort. Help me to put you first and take risks in following you. God I give you everything.



Online Media

For the December Pastoral Council meeting, Carol Anne and Ed Landgraf, Parish Council Chaircouple, asked members to share websites, blogs, email subscriptions etc. that strengthen our Catholic faith. On many of these sites, information is presented in video format. At the meeting, 4 wonderful examples of the videos were shown. The topics were the Benefits of Belief, Having a Personal Relationship with Jesus, What Do You Get out of Mass and What is Sin?

In the new year, you will have the opportunity to learn about and enrich your faith with some of this content through presentations before and during weekend Masses and to gather and participate with others at sessions outside of Mass. Please watch for the announcements.

In the meantime, sit down with your favourite beverage and take some time to check out the following sites for your faith formation and learning. Note: if you read this newsletter online at www.stcecregina.com, the site addresses are clickable links.

The Wild Goose

Discovering a Deeper Relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Wild Goose is a work of the Holy Spirit, which is awakening in the hearts of all those participating in God's love and transforming power. This is a love that has been revealed to us by Jesus Christ and that leads us to our heavenly Father.

www.thewildgooseisloose.com/

Ignatian Spirituality

Ignatian spirituality is a spirituality for everyday life. It insists that God is present in our world and active in our lives. It is a pathway to deeper prayer, good decisions guided by keen discernment, and an active life of service to others.

www.ignatianspirituality.com/

Jesuit Prayer

Ignatian spirituality reminds us that God pursues us in the routines of our home and work life, and in the hopes and fears of life's

challenges. This prayer site helps to anchor your day and strengthen your resolve to remember what truly matters.

www.jesuitprayer.org/

uEvangelize

Focus is on evangelization and helping people learn how to make a real contribution to the renewal of the Church and the world.

Member Site \$9 a month.

www.uevangelize.org/

Christopher West COR Project

Founded by Christopher West and inspired by John Paul II's Theology of the Body, The Cor Project aims to equip men and women to learn, live and share the beauty of the divine plan for human life, love and sexuality in a new evangelization. This is a project of the heart ("cor" is Latin for heart). Includes a member section \$10 a month.

www.corproject.com/

Redeemed Online

RedeemedOnline was created with the belief that we can and must share the good news of Jesus Christ through social media.

RedeemedOnline exists because they believe that we as a Church can evangelize more effectively online by being innovative and creative on social media.

www.redeemedonline.com/

Lead Like Jesus

Lead Like Jesus is a global leadership development organization that helps individuals and organizations lead more

effectively by following the model of Jesus. They believe Jesus is the greatest leadership role model of all time. Their leadership philosophy is simple: Follow the Leader.

www.leadlikejesus.com/

Richard Rohr – Center for Action and Contemplation

Fr. Richard Rohr is a globally recognized ecumenical teacher bearing witness to the universal awakening within Christian mysticism and the Perennial Tradition. Fr. Richard's teaching is grounded in the Franciscan alternative orthodoxy—practices of contemplation and self-emptying, expressing itself in radical compassion, particularly for the socially marginalized.

www.cac.org/richard-rohr/richard-rohr-ofm/

Ron Rolheiser

Ron Rolheiser was born in Macklin, SK. Following his school years, he entered the novitiate of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and was ordained to the priesthood in 1972. Rolheiser is a renowned book author and writes a popular column which is carried by almost 100 newspapers worldwide.

www.ronrolheiser.com/en/

Dynamic Catholic - Matthew Kelly

At the Dynamic Catholic Institute, they believe that millions of ordinary Catholics want to be involved in a movement that provides a game-changing strategy for the Church today.

They are passionate about finding a way for every Catholic to play a role in the great renewal that everyone knows the Catholic Church desperately needs.

Matthew Kelly is the founder of Dynamic Catholic. He has dedicated his life to helping people and organizations become the-best-version-of-themselves. Matthew Kelly is an international acclaimed speaker, author, and business consultant. His books have been published in more than 25 languages, have appeared on the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* bestseller lists, and have sold more than 20 million copies.

www.dynamiccatholic.com/

Word On Fire - Bishop Robert Barron

Bishop Robert Barron is the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries and Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He is also the host of *CATHOLICISM*, a groundbreaking, award-winning documentary about the Catholic Faith, which aired on PBS. Bishop Barron is a #1 Amazon bestselling Author.

WordOnFire.org, reaches millions of people each year, and he is one of the most-followed Catholics on social media. His regular YouTube videos have been viewed over 18 million times.

www.wordonfire.org/

Prager University

Five minute videos about diverse topics including Religion and Philosophy. They take the best ideas from the best minds and distill

them down to five focused minutes.

www.prageru.com

Life Site News

LifeSiteNews.com is a non-profit internet service dedicated to issues of culture, life, and family.

Daily News reports are widely circulated reports on important developments in the United States, Canada and around the world. Their purpose is to provide balance and more accurate coverage on culture, life and family matters than is usually given by other media. The service was originally started by Campaign Life Coalition, a Canadian national pro-life organization.

www.lifesitenews.com

Ascension Presents

Ascension Presents is an evangelistic platform bringing entertaining, faith-filled, and dynamic presenters like Fr. Mike Schmitz and Jeff Cavins. By providing engaging content for their audience that reflects the good, the true and the beautiful, they hope to bring their hearts closer to Christ.

www.ascensionpresents.com

Real Life Catholic - Chris Stefanick

Real Life Catholic's purpose is to ignite a bold, contagious faith in the heart of every Catholic by building a movement of Catholics who share the beauty, power and truth of the Gospel with a world that has largely forgotten.

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput has called Chris Stefanick "one of the most engaging young defenders of the Christian faith on the scene today." Chris speaks to over 50,000 teens, young adults and parents every year.

www.reallifecatholic.com

Spirit Daily

Catholic daily spiritual news from around the world.

www.spiritdaily.com/

Life Teen

As a Eucharist-centered movement within the Roman Catholic Church, Life Teen leads teenagers and their families into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. With the Blessed Virgin Mary as their intercessor and guide, Life Teen seeks to unleash the fullness of the Sacramental power present within the young Church.

www.lifeteen.com

YouVersion

YouVersion is a simple, ad-free Bible that brings God's Word into your daily life.

www.youversion.com

Words of Jesus Everyday, Identity in Christ Daily, Prayers and Blessings Daily

These apps deliver short scriptures containing the words of Jesus from the bible, an affirming short bible verse every day and inspiring and biblical prayers and blessings to you every day, to give a new source of inspiration in how to pray.

**Saint Cecilia
Catholic Church**
5020—7th Avenue
Regina SK S4T 0S1
306-545-4051
www.stcecregina.com

Mass Schedule
Tuesday 7 pm
Wednesday to Friday 8:30 am
Saturday 7 pm
Sunday 10 am

Archbishop's Christmas Message

...and Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger.... (Lk 2:7)

Dear brothers and sisters of Christ of the Archdiocese of Regina,

Warm greetings to each and all of you. In this holy season we enter into a mystery, the mystery of the God of all creation coming not in overwhelming display of power and majesty, but in vulnerability, in poverty, in an act of self-emptying which speaks of a boundless love. When we kneel before the Christ child, we kneel before the mystery of the Master of the Universe becoming small for our sake, the eternal Word becoming 'abbreviated,' so that we might see with our own eyes, and touch with our hands, the word of life.

Pope Francis invites us to think of the Incarnation as God going in search of us. With a loving weakness for those who are lost, the God revealed in Jesus is a God who searches us out, searches for us especially in our darkness, in order to lavish forgiveness on us, to pour out a cascade of consolation, of tenderness. God finds joy in this; the Lord is the Lord of consolation, the Lord of tenderness.



Early on in his pontificate, Pope Francis used an image to speak of the birth of Jesus which totally caught my imagination. He said it was to have hands that God became human. "God meddles in our miseries, he approaches our wounds and heals them with his hands; it was to have hands he became human."

This reminded me immediately of the sublime poem 'somewhere I have never travelled', by the American poet E. E. Cummings. He speaks about the gentle subtlety of God's presence in our midst, with the line "nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands."

What do we learn from this? It tells us that God loves what is human; loves human life, loves this human condition that we so often struggle with. God loves what he has created, loves so much as to become what he has created; to become one of us, to draw so near. God loves this created world, loves us stumbling human beings, loves us enough to give himself to redeem us.

In the Incarnation we learn of the great dignity of what it is to be human, for being human is the language God uses to speak his very self. We learn that the designs and dreams of God are woven into the fabric of what it is to be human. We come to God, God draws us to himself, through our humanity, in our living and in our dying.

So come, let us kneel in a moment of silent wonder before the God who comes in search of us, who loves us into life. And let us kneel too, in a different way, before the vulnerable and the wounded in our midst, mindful of our own great need for God's mercy, and for the holy calling of bringing God's gentleness and mercy to others, pouring out a cascade of tenderness on the lonely, the strangers in our midst, the longing souls, the suffering. Let us find God's own joy by being bearers of that joy and hope to others.

Wishing each and all of you a blessed celebration of the Lord's birth, and every good blessing in the New Year.

✠Donald J. Bolen
Archbishop of Regina