

St. Peter's, Holy Guardian Angels, and St. John the Baptist Parishes

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January 12, 2025

Baptism of the Lord

Mass Readings

The **First Reading** is from *the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 42:1-4; 6-7*. This prophecy of Isaiah was chosen today's feast which commemorates the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, because on that occasion the Father's voice from heaven proclaimed that Christ was "his beloved servant in whom he was well pleased." Following the interpretation of the inspired Evangelists and of the ancient and constant tradition of the Church, we can have no hesitation in seeing in these works of Isaiah, written five centuries or so before Christ, a description of the Savior who came on earth to teach Jew and Gentile the new law of God, the law of love and mercy..

But this was all for us; as God he already had all things in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But in his human nature—our weak human nature—he was one that day proclaimed God's true and faithful servant. At the same moment we human beings were accepted *in him* and *through him* as God's adopted children. The mission of Christ was for us. There is no comparison between what God has prepared for us, and promises us, and the trifling conditions he asks us to fulfill in order to earn his promised reward.

The **Gospel for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord** is from *Luke 3:15-16; 21-22*. Of the hundreds of Jews who had flocked to hear John the Baptist's message, and who were present when Christ insisted on going through John's baptismal rite and who had probably heard the words from heaven proclaiming him to be the expected Messiah, only two left the Baptist and followed him. One of these was Andrew and the other was most probably John the Evangelist. Later in that day Andrew told Peter, his brother, that he had found the Messiah and Peter joined him, too.

What was wrong with the hundreds of others? We are told they were all agog about the Messiah and were wondering in their hearts if John was not he. Yet when the real Messiah was pointed out to them they did nothing about it. John had told them the Messiah would baptize them, not with water as he did, but with the Holy Spirit of God, and with fire. As Jews they must have understood that this meant he would make of them a holy people, a spiritual people, a people close to God and cleansed from all earth attachments.

Was it this that held them back? Were their hearts so centered on the things of earth, the things of this life, that they had no time for the things spiritual? Were they so anxious for a king, a messiah, who would set them free from the hated pagan Romans and give them once more a powerful earthly kingdom, that talk of the kingdom of God and of a spiritual life made no impression on them? Their dealings with Christ during his public mission amongst them, their disbelief, their opposition, their persecution, which led eventually to the death on the cross answer these questions for us. The vast majority of the Jews of that day did not want a spiritual Messiah or kingdom. They were interested in a heaven of the future, they wanted their heaven, their happiness, and prosperity here on earth.

Before we pass any judgment on such folly let us have a look into our own hearts today. We are Christians, we are followers of Christ, we know he was God, we believe his word. We are convinced that getting to heaven is more important than getting all the treasures and pleasures this earth has to offer. But do we always live up to these convictions, are we true Christians the seven days of the week? In our work, in our speech, in our dealings with others, in our family life are we truly following Christ and his teaching?

Is my way of life, my daily conduct, such that it would cause a non-Christian to say: "That man has something noble and sensible about him, that man is concerned with the things that really matter; that man has an inward peace and sense of security which I have not got, a sense of peace

and security which comes not from the things of this world. I must find out what it is and get it for myself?"

In all sincerity I cannot see any non-Christian speaking thus of me today, but helped by God's grace, it could and may be truly said of me in the days to come. God grant that this may be so. —Excerpted from *The Sunday Readings* by Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.

From Bishop Kirkpatrick

As you may know, Jubilee Year 2025 opens on December 29. All in our diocese are invited to share in this celebration in person or in prayer.

The following is a passage from the homily I will give at the Opening Mass. You may wish to use this or adapt it for your homilies during the Christmas Season.

As we continue to celebrate and ponder the profound mystery of the birth of Jesus Christ with this feast of the Holy Family, we also celebrate a significant milestone, the Jubilee Year of 2025. "Spes Non Confundit" is the title of the Bull of Indiction for this Jubilee Year. The phrase translates to "Hope Does Not Disappoint," reflecting the themes of renewal and hope often emphasized in jubilee celebrations within the Church. In a jubilee year, the Church focuses on mercy, reconciliation, and the invitation to a deeper relationship with God.

The logo for the Jubilee features four figures embracing each other, representing the solidarity and friendship of the people. The figures come from the four corners of the earth, and the figure at the head holds onto the cross. There are rough waves under the figures, symbolizing that life's pilgrimage does not always go smoothly in calm waters. Often the circumstances of daily life and events in the wider world require a greater call to hope. That's why we should pay special attention to the lower part of the cross, which has been elongated and turned into the shape of an anchor that is let down into the waves. The anchor is well-known as a symbol of hope. In maritime jargon, the 'anchor of hope' refers to the reserve anchor used by vessels involved in emergency maneuvers to stabilize the ship during storms. It is worth noting that the image illustrates the pilgrim's journey not as an individual undertaking but rather as something communal, marked by an increasing dynamism leading one ever closer to the cross.

Below is a bulletin notice that may be shared in your bulletins and social media.

Opening Mass in our Diocese for Jubilee 2025:

Dec. 29, 10:30 am

St. Ninian Cathedral, Antigonish

All are invited as Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick celebrates Mass to open the Jubilee Year in our diocese.

The Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025

is an opportunity for all people to enter into a pilgrimage of hope.

Whether we celebrate locally in our dioceses, cathedrals, or Canada's National Shrines, our local shrines or make a pilgrimage to Rome, we are called to search for signs of hope and be signs of hope in our families, for our neighbours, the imprisoned, the sick, and dying, the young and old. The Jubilee Year will remain open until December 28, 2025.

For more on the Jubilee:

<https://www.antigonishdiocese.com/jubilee-2025/>

Bishop Wayne Joseph Kirkpatrick

Dying with Christ – Living with Hope is a three-video series seeking to demystify the dying process, making way for a new approach to end of life questions. The discussion, led by theologians and healthcare professionals, will give timeless perspectives on suffering, grief, dying, and our duty to care.

Offered by the Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada via Zoom on January 15, 22, and 29, 2025, at 8 pm (Atlantic) or February 20, 27 and March 6, 2025 at 1 pm (Atlantic)

For details and to register:

<https://www.antigonishdiocese.com/providing-hope/>

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, usually held in January, is scheduled this year for the week of Mon. Jan. 20th through to Friday Jan. 24th, 2025 Venue TBA.

Do you receive our diocesan newsletters?

Seven Ears of Grain is emailed each Monday morning, with news and events from our diocese and parishes, plus news and resources from the Vatican and national offices.

Witness of Hope is our seasonal newsletter.

To subscribe, visit <https://www.antigonishdiocese.com/newsletter/>

or email jennifer@dioceseofantigonish.ca

From January until May, Fr. Bill Burke will be presenting a series of eight sessions on the documents of Vatican II.

The first two will take place Sunday, January 19 and Sunday, January 26 at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish from 2:00-4:00pm.

All are welcome. The sessions will be livestreamed.

Future dates will be announced by the end of January.

Holy Rosary Cinema Circle

Join us on Thursday, January 23rd for a showing of “**Love and Mercy: Faustina**” This is an inspiring story of **Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska** of the Blessed Sacrament.

St Faustina has a great following both in her native Poland and around the world. Join us for this truly amazing story! This was rescheduled because of bad weather in December.

There is no charge for this event. Holy Rosary Parish, Westmount.

All are welcome.

Schedule of Mass Intentions

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

SJB 4:00 PM

+ *Marjorie Digout*

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

SP 9:00 AM

+ *Gerard Taylor*

Friday, January 17, 2025

HGA 11:00 AM

+ *Alfred Masters*

Saturday, January 18, 2025

SJB 4:00 PM

+ *Patrick Bourque*

SP 5:30 PM

+ *Claire LeBlanc*

Sunday, January 19, 2025

SH 9:00 AM

+ *Michael Marshall*

HGA 11:00 AM

+ *Deceased Members of Martell, Logan & Peters Family*

Receipts

St. John the Baptist

December 14, 22, 25, 28, 2024, Jan. 1, 2025

Envelopes & Loose	\$ 2,778.00
Memory Tree	715.00
Christmas	1,265.00
Oil	300.00
Cemetery	170.00
Property Maintenance	100.00

Total \$ 5,328.00

St. John the Baptist

January 5, 2025

Envelopes & Loose	\$ 1,190.00
Initial Offering	317.00
Cemetery	500.00

Total \$ 2,007.00

St. Peter's

December 15, 22, 25, 29, 2024, January 1, 5, 2025

Envelopes & Loose	\$ 3,565.25
Candles	104.00
Memory Tree	810.00
Cemetery	550.00
Missals	5.00
Maintenance	600.00
Initial Offering	287.00
Parish Dues	20.00
Christmas	1,147.00
New Year's	45.00

Total \$ 7,141.25

Holy Guardian Angels

December 15, 22, 29, 2024 January 1, 5, 2025

Envelopes & Loose	\$ 4,039.00
Candles	197.10
Missals	40.00
Christmas	1,452.00
Parish Dues	50.00
Flowers	40.00
Initial Offering	385.00
Solemnity of Mary	215.00

Total \$ 6,418.10

Community Notices

SJB: St. John the Baptist CWL would like to thank all those who donated their refundables at the Bottle Exchange. We collected \$175 for Chalice, a Catholic international aid charity. With the funds much needed supplies were purchased for people in need. Again, thank you and God Bless.

SP: Have your say on the future of the St. Peter's Trail. Attend a public open house on January 18 from 12:30 – 2:30 at the St. Peter's & Area Lion's Club, 39 Lions Ave, St. Peter's, NS B0E 3B0.

SP: The Memory Tree has raised a total of \$2,570.00 this year. This is the most successful year to date! Thank you to all who contributed!! Special thanks to Fonda Stone for help with the decorations, to Doris Carter and her team for their help with the set up and storage of the tree, Judy Madden for reciting the names each week, and to Laura Larade and Richard Landry for processing the donations.

HGA: A faithful parishioner, Eva Sampson, will be celebrating her 97th birthday on Fri, Jan 17. Her phone number is 902-587-2522 if anyone would like to extend their best Happy

Birthday  wishes to her!

RTO: Richmond RTO General Luncheon Meeting-Seal Cove Restaurant-Louisdale-January 14, 2025-12:00 PM All RTO Members Welcome!

SP: TEA and TUNES Sunday January 19, 2025-Bonnie Brae Club 2-4 -Wayne Bona, Tyrone David, Mannie Bourgeois-Admission \$5.00- Half and Half Tickets Sold- Light Lunch will be served

Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus, Council 14280 will hold their general council meeting, at the St. Peter's Glebe on Thursday, January 23, 2025, 7:00 pm.

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

(Notes taken by Fr. Yake from the Zoom presentation to the clergy of the Diocese of Antigonish – Nov. 19, 2024)

What is wrong with it?

It has progressed in Canada and is employed not only for those who are sick. The decision of one BC female judge in 2015, a pro-abortion judge, enabled MAiD to be a legally accepted option.

Main Points:

- Under attack is conscience rights of medical personnel.
- The criteria for applying MAiD is vague.
- There have been 60,000 deaths by MAiD since 2016.
- Eligibility has extended to mentally challenged persons and those who put this choice in their will.
- Vulnerable persons are in danger.
- When death is accepted as therapy then why apply any other remedies? Killing has been normalized in Nova Scotia and doctors are required to ask patients to choose MAiD.

Arguments Opposing MAiD

We are not the authors of our lives. Human dignity comes from God and not the members of Parliament. MAiD is chosen for existential problems that ignores the spiritual dimension where meaning is recognized as coming from God. MAiD heralds the end of the Christian perspective. When only the life of the able-bodied is recognized as having value is it a social justice concern.

The teaching of the Church on this issue is clear:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church leaves no doubt that euthanasia is “morally unacceptable’ (#2277) Numbers 2278 and 2279 discuss further this issue. The Code of Canon Law (Church Law) #1184, calls euthanasia an intrinsic evil; that means that it is never justifiable. Sadly, it has been found that 70% of Catholics are pro-euthanasia, but to choose euthanasia with full knowledge and consent, is a mortal sin. It is worth noting that the Last Rites of the Church are forbidden to Catholics who choose MAiD as are funeral rites.

Nova Scotia has become secularized and Christian teaching is largely ignored. Politicians seem afraid of the issue so, not being opposed, MAiD will increase in acceptance. Catholics need to ask MLAs about their stand as Catholic hospitals are being bullied to offer MAiD.