

Ministry Centre Holiday Hours

Sunday, December 22	9:30 am – 1:30 pm
Monday, December 23	9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Tuesday, December 24	9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Wednesday, December 25	Closed
Thursday, December 26	Closed
Friday, December 27	9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Saturday, December 28	2:30 pm – 6:30 pm
Sunday, December 29	9:30 am – 1:30 pm
Monday, December 30	9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Tuesday, December 31	9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Wednesday, January 1, 2020	Closed

Ministry Centre Contacts - (416-447-5571)

Pastor: Friar Dennis J. Mason, OFM Conv.
Ext. 234

Associate Pastor: Friar Peter Knaapen, OFM Conv.
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Parish Manager: Connie Durante
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Franciscan Ministries:
1320 Leslie Street, Suite 200
416-690-5611

St. Anthony of Padua Mission Aid
1320 Leslie Street, Suite 100
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Society of St. Vincent de Paul
416-447-5571 Ext. 570

St. Bonaventure Catholic School
1340 Leslie Street, Toronto ON. M3C 2K9
Phone: 416-393-5263 Fax: 416-393-5117

Christmas Mealtime Prayer (From December 25 to January 12)



Father, Your Word calls Jesus “Our Great God and Saviour.” As You bless our food, bless our hearts. May Your Holy Spirit help us to celebrate Jesus, God Who is truly with us and Saviour Who frees us to live in Your love. Amen

Join our Parish: Pick-up a registration form at the back of the church, Ministry Centre or download online.

Becoming Catholic (RCIA): For those not baptized, those baptized in another Christian tradition and those baptized Catholic but have not completed their initiation, a process of becoming Catholic involving prayer, inquiry and study is available. Please contact **Greg**, our Lay Pastoral Associate.

School-aged Children: Preparation of children for the celebration of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation is provided through our Parish Program. Further information will be provided in the bulletin during the school year.

Baptism of Infants: One Sunday every other month. Request forms are on the website, at the back of the church or at the Ministry Centre.

Marriage: Contact **Friar Dennis** or **Friar Peter** at least one year before the desired date. Couples need to participate in a Marriage Preparation Course.

Pastoral Care: Ministers of the Eucharist bring Communion to the homebound. Contact the Ministry Centre to make arrangements.

Religious Life: Discerning a call to the consecrated religious life please see one of the friars.

Spiritual Direction: Contact Friar Mark at friarmsted2015@gmail.com

Prayer Network: Members pray daily for intentions held in confidence. Contact **Ellen Brock** at [647-622-5689](tel:647-622-5689)

Funeral: Please contact the Ministry Centre and we will assist you in planning the liturgical services.

THE FRANCISCAN CHURCH OF ST. BONAVENTURE

1300 Leslie Street, Toronto, ON., M3C 2K9
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Website: www.st-bonaventure.ca



YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT ST. BONAVENTURE

GROWING IN SPIRIT, COMMUNITY AND SERVICE
Inspired by St. Francis we seek to live and proclaim the gospel in our daily lives, responding to the spiritual hungers of the community and becoming an oasis of peace, prayer and service.

December 25, 2019
The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord



And Now A Word from Our Pastor ... It was Christmas, 1223, and St. Francis of Assisi was celebrating Christmas in the mountains. He told one of the friars: “I want to set before our eyes how Jesus lay in the straw of a manger surrounded by animals.” So a manger was prepared, animals were brought, people gathered and the first Christmas creche was created. A biography of St. Francis tells the story.

“The night was lighted up like the day to the delight of the people. The woods rang with the voices of the crowd in song. Francis stood in front of the manger with a joyful heart, offering his love to Jesus. They celebrated the Mass and experienced a wonderful comfort of spirit. Everyone returned home with the scene firmly in their memory.”

May the lights of the Christmas Season enlighten your spirits. May the sound of the carols bring joy to your hearts. May you experience the love of God in Jesus and return that love in prayer and praise. May the Liturgies of the Season be a source of comfort to you. And may our celebrations this year live long in your memory.

Christmas Blessings from the Friars and Staff of St. Bonaventure.

And Now, A Word from Our Patron Saint

Any person who has seen many days of life can love God better than a scholar of theology.
St. Bonaventure

A Letter to Our Children

Dear Girls and Boys,

Thank you very much for getting a warm bed ready for Me for Christmas. When you said a prayer or were kind to someone during Advent, you put a piece of straw in My manger. Merry Christmas. I love you very much.

Jesus

Christmas and New Year Mass Schedule

The Nativity of the Lord – Christmas Eve
Tuesday, **December 24th** - No 9:00 am Mass
Masses at 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm

The Nativity of the Lord – Christmas Day
Wednesday, **December 25th** – No 9:00 am Mass
Masses at 10:00 am and 12:00 noon

Feast of St. Stephen, The First Martyr
(Canada: Boxing Day)
Thursday, **December 26th** – Regular 9:00 am Mass

Feast of the Holy family
Saturday, **December 28th** – Vigil Mass, 5:00 pm
Sunday, **December 29th** - Regular Sunday Masses
8:30 am; 10:00 am and 12:00 noon

Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Tuesday, **December 31st** – Regular 9:00 am Mass
New Year’s Eve Mass – 5:00 pm

New Year’s Day
Wednesday, **January 1st, 2020** – 10:00 am only

Psalm 96 ~ Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Psalm 97 ~ A light will shine on us this day: The Lord is born for us.

Psalm 98 ~ All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

Bless Your Christmas Tree



Pray the Our Father, then:

God our Father, we praise You for the Light of Creation: Sun and moon and stars of night. We praise you for the Light of Your Word: spoken to us every time we hear the Bible. We praise You for Jesus Light of the World. As

we celebrate His Birth, bless us and our Christmas Tree, filled with lights. May Your Holy Spirit help us always to live in the Light of Jesus. Amen.

Bless Your Christmas Crèche



Pray the Our Father, then:

God our Father, thank you for sending Your Son to become One of us. We believe that He is God-with-us. Bless us and bless this scene of His Birth. As we look at it, may Your Holy Spirit raise us up to Jesus Who came down to us in Bethlehem. Amen.

Christmas with the Saints

In our Catholic tradition, the Saints whose memory Days are celebrated during the Christmas Season are called: Companions of Christ. Why not do something on each of their days to share their company with Jesus. It beats a partridge in a pear tree.

December 26 ~ St. Stephen, the first person who was martyred because he believed in Jesus. Offer a prayer for Christians throughout the world who are persecuted because they believe.

December 27 ~ St. John, the Gospel writer. St. John tells the story of how God revealed Himself to us in the life of Jesus. Take a moment to write a few lines about how God has revealed Himself in your life.

December 28 ~ The Holy Innocents who were completely blameless but who suffered. Offer a prayer for children born and unborn to be protected from harm.

December 28-29 ~ The Holy Family. Come to Church and we will pray a prayer together for all families: nuclear families, extended families, blended families, separated families, asking God to bless them.

December 31- January 1 ~ The Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. Gather for Mass (December 31, 5:00 pm; January 1, 10:00 am) as we celebrate this Holy Day to proclaim our faith in Jesus- Son of God and Son of Mary and offer thanks for the gift of Mary as our Mother.

January 2 ~ St. Basil and St. Gregory lived in the 4th century and helped Christians to believe that the Holy Spirit is God. Google the prayer "Come, Holy Spirit" and use it today to invite God the Spirit into your heart.

January 4-5 ~ The Epiphany of the Lord. As each of the Magi brought a gift to Jesus, give a gift to someone today. It could be a phone call, a note, a prayer, some food; use your imagination.

January 6 ~ St. Andre Bessette – a Canadian Saint. Sing "O Canada" today and offer a prayer for our nation.

January 7 ~ St. Raymond of Penyafort was a professor who heard God's call to live and minister as a Dominican Friar. Offer a prayer for young people who are discovering how God wants them to live and serve.

January 11-12 ~ The Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. As you enter the church today bless yourself with holy water. Say a prayer of thanks to God for your Baptism and the gifts of life, faith, hope and charity which its waters poured into you.



The Prayer Network is a group of parishioners who pray daily for all the prayer requests received by the Network. Nearly 45 parishioners are members of this group which began 1994. All prayer requests are kept in confidence and no names are included when requests are passed onto the Network.

Be sure to contact the network (the number is shown on the weekly bulletin) when you seek prayer support for yourself or for someone else. We gratefully receive requests for prayer in Thanksgiving when our prayers are answered. If you would like to become a member of the Prayer Network, please contact **Julie Flood at 416-391-0238.**

Christian Meditation Group at St. Bonaventure Parish

The Christian Meditation Group of St. Bonaventure Parish meets on Saturday morning at 9:30 am in the Oak Room of the Parish Hall. The group was established in 1984 by Josef Erdle, a parishioner.

Christian meditation is coming to the silent awareness of the indwelling Christ. We offer our hearts and minds to God, using a mantra or prayer word to help us overcome distractions which draw us away from the present moment, within which we discern the presence of God within us. We practice this form of contemplative prayer in stillness and silence, using talks and music to help us prepare. We meditate for 20 minutes at our sessions and follow this with discussions as appropriate.

Meditation can also reduce stress, improve concentration, increase happiness, slow the aging process, improve cardiovascular health, and many more. You need not have any experience in meditation to attend the group. Please join us Saturday morning at 9:30 am in the Oak Room of the parish Hall.

'Vocation Seeds'

Christmas – The Birth of Our Lord - December 25, 2019

We celebrate the birth of our Lord into our world; however, many have not received the birth of our Lord into their hearts. If Christ lives in your heart and you would like to help others discover the Lord, you may be called to be a priest, deacon, brother or sister. Visit www.franciscans.org; www.vocationtoronto.ca or speak with one of the friars.

Christmas Prayer for those who work on Christmas Day



Lord, we pause to remember those who must work today. As we spend our day in celebration, make us mindful of these others who are serving us.

Help us to support them and remember them and turn our hearts toward them with gratitude.

I ask you, Loving Father, to extend a special sense of your presence to the people they will meet today in their line of work.

May they shed on them the light of the Bethlehem Star, and the Spirit of Christmas. Amen

©PastoralPlanning.com, 2009. Portions of these prayers were adapted from resources available on this website: <http://www.christmas-day.org/christmas-prayers.html>



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, St. Bonaventure Conference

In over 140 countries worldwide, more than 800,000 men and women call themselves “Vincentians.” These people are members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, one of the largest Catholic lay organizations in the world. As Vincentians we understand that everything that we have – skills, talents, material goods – comes from God, and that we are called as Christians to use those resources to reduce the suffering experienced by our brothers and sisters in our community and around the world.

Vincentians are grouped in “Conferences”, which are usually parish-based. Our conference of St. Bonaventure serves those in need in our parish and the area surrounding it. We believe that “no work of charity is foreign to the Society”, and so each Conference helps people in their service area in different ways – they may provide assistance with groceries, clothing, beds, needed household items or simply by listening and companionship. The key to the Society’s service is face-to-face contact with those we serve. Vincentians seek to always “see Christ in the face of the poor”, and to bring the love of God to those who are in material or spiritual need. If you or someone you know needs assistance or you wish to learn more about the Society, please call **416-447-5571, ext. 570** and leave a confidential message with your name and contact information.

Casseroles for the Good Shepherd Centre

As part of St. Bonaventure’s “Community Outreach” we participate in the “Provide-a-Meal” program which helps feed the hungry men and women who rely on the Good Shepherd Ministries in downtown Toronto for their daily food. The Good Shepherd kitchen serves 1200 or more meals and snacks every day. The casseroles we provide are a needed and appreciated supplement to the meals prepared ‘in-house’.

Currently about 50 plus parishioners make an average of 55 casseroles a month, using a recipe and pans supplied by Good Shepherd Ministry. The recipe ‘Spanish Rice’ is quick and easy to cook. It must be frozen at home, then delivered to St. Bonaventure Ministry Centre for monthly pick-up. More cooks are always needed – participation can be on monthly, bi-monthly, or occasional basis. If you are interested in this worthwhile and satisfying project, please contact contact **Eva Trace at 416-447-3040.**

A note to our wonderful Casserole Cooks: Christmas Greetings, and heartfelt thanks, for your continuing dedication and generosity. Remember, each time you provide a meal for someone, who might otherwise go hungry, you honour the words of Jesus to Simon Peter: “Feed my lambs – Feed my sheep.” (Keep up the good work and God bless.....*Eva*)



Dr. Simone’s Canadian Food for Children

St. Bonaventure Parish collects bulk food staples (rice, pasta, soap, sugar, cooking oil, canned fish, etc.) on a once monthly basis solicited in the church bulletin and/or announced at mass.

Also, shoes, clothing, medicines, medical devices and school supplies are contributed and stored in a storage room in the Parish Centre. These items are then driven to Dr. Simone’s CFFC warehouse by St. Bonaventure volunteers pack them for shipping to approved, vetted destinations (schools, missions, etc.) in more than 20 developing countries. Already in 2018 more than 300 containers of goods have been shipped. Dr. Simone and his wife were challenged to start this ministry by Mother Theresa, and they have been awarded the order of Canada for their service to the world’s less fortunate. Dr. Simone’s warehouse is at Dixie Road and Lakeshore Blvd. There are only one or two trips a month and the trips are made in the morning since the warehouse closes at noon. Volunteer drivers are always welcome and will be called upon for only as many trips as needed. Any regular car or van will be fine for these trips.



Ministry with Maturing Adults: Nurturing Spirituality in the Second Half of Life **2020 Theme: Seeking A More Contemplative Way of Life**

This ministry seeks to support all dimensions of life’s journey with a focus on the challenges, blessings and call to service in the second half of life. This ministry reaches out to those transitioning into their retirement years, and those living in the middle and later years of life.

We seek to deepen our faith, to live with profound hope and share our compassion through relationships that connect us with one another in our community, and with the natural world that sustains all of creation. We seek to nurture inter-generational relationships to grow in our call to be wise elders for the world.

There is a summons in the later years to recognize one’s spiritual strengths and inner resources; to appreciate one’s own life story, and to embrace the need to address the tasks of the later phases of life’s journey. This invitation includes: letting go, forgiveness, gratitude, creativity, celebration, renewal of awe and wonder, ‘development of a mentoring attitude rather than negative criticism’ and confronting mortality.

After another delightful and stimulating year of programs and service we look forward to 2020 with a new Winter program of topics and events; flyers are available to take home and please share with friends and neighbours. Deepest gratitude to all participants of the 2019 programs; we are deepening our sense of awareness of God’s presence radiating throughout the community.

Gratitude to Ginny Doty as she plans for 2020 another inspiring workshop on **Forgiveness** and the importance of nurturing this as a habit of the heart. Participants from previous years have found the program transformative, enabling one to live the later years with more freedom and joy.

Gratitude to Gisela Cote for facilitating another successful **Life Story Writing** program. This is one of great gifts to the community, as participants learn to appreciate one’s own life story in a new way. Also, participants can continue to meet monthly in a **Writing Circle Group.**

Gratitude to all the members of the Advisory Committee that continue to shape this program through their generosity of sharing their gifts with the entire community.

The **Cyber-Seniors program** at Senator O’Connor continues; members of the St. Bonaventure’s community find the support and help with their technology challenges wonderful! The young people are so patient and kind!

The Summer Book and Movie Club continues and is open to ALL! This relaxed, informative, welcoming environment invites exploration of current events through the sharing of books and watching films together.

Our Hope – That we gather to deepen our spiritual life, that we reach out with loving kindness to one another, and celebrate the goodness of all creation.



Would you like to give more time to God, but wonder how to do that when your life is so busy? Do you long for holiness, and feel a need for support in growing spiritually? Perhaps your heart has been moved by stories of St. Francis of Assisi, or the Peace Prayer attributed to him, and you are seeking that same holy simplicity, true peace and perfect joy? If so, Christ may be calling you to explore the **Secular Franciscan life.** We would be happy to meet with you to share about the Franciscan journey. **We invite you to come to one of our meeting, which are on the 3rd**

Monday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Francis Room of the Parish Centre. For more information on becoming a Secular Franciscan please contact **Friar Peter at 416-447-5571 Ext. 233.**



Each day countless women living on the street struggle with mental health issues. St. Clare Inn offers them hope. Opened in 2007 by a group of volunteers from our community and a handful of Franciscan Friars from St. Bonaventure Church. St. Clare Inn is a unique program dedicated to helping homeless women with diagnosed mental health issues. It is a 5-bedroom house where women are given a safe and comfortable space in a home-like setting with professional support and guidance to manage their own mental health. The ability to register for government support to manage their health care needs, to re-learn some basic life skills, to explore courses for future employment and to give back to the community through weekly volunteering are all part of the individualized one-on-one programming at St. Clare Inn. Please consider being part of this mission and support St. Clare Inn and your community at large. Visit us at **www.stclare.org.**

Theology and Tea

On **January 23rd** the Parish community will continue its invitation to study and reflect on God's presence with us. Let us begin with the 23rd and ponder future dates and process. The sessions are open to all parishioners and friends of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Much peace and joy for a good and New Year..... *Friar Mark*

Faith Formation

“And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory...” (John 1:14)

This is the Good News we proclaim Christmas Day: Christ has united himself to every human being by choosing to become one with us. It's a message the community of faith has been sharing from generation to generation.

God became truly human while remaining truly God. What a mystery! Jesus Christ helps us to know the Father's love. Shows us our truest selves and leads the way to our eternal destiny: communion with God. “If we seek to know ourselves and the meaning of our lives, then we only need to look to Jesus Christ.” (NDC, 85) By discovering and embracing the Christmas message, we experience God's love dwelling in our hearts and are entrusted to share this joy with others.

Here are some ways that we help one another grow in the knowledge and experience of the Word who became flesh:

- We accompany people who are hearing the Gospel for the first time. Throughout the year, men and women come to the church with a request to know more about Jesus. Parish staff and volunteers help these inquirers to discover God's presence in their lives and to embrace the Gospel through a process of initiation culminating in Baptism.
- We support Christians that feel drawn to live out their baptismal dignity by becoming members of the Catholic Church.
- Volunteers assist and empower parents to share the faith with children, while preparing the children to live more fully as friends of Jesus and be strengthened by the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation and Reconciliation.
- Children hear and respond to the Word through the proclamation of the Gospel during a Liturgy of the Word adapted to their capacity and led by a dedicated team of volunteers at the 10 am Sunday Mass.

Like Mary of Nazareth, who treasured the Good news and pondered its meaning in her heart, may we, too, proclaim, celebrate, live and share its message to all who wish to discover and follow the Lord.

If you would like to know more about the Christian faith, or you are a parishioner who would like to explore ways to share the faith with others, contact **Greg in the Ministry Centre**.



Calling all women 16 years of age and older! Join for the first time or renew your membership in the Catholic Women's League (CWL) of Canada, an organization that promotes and encourages the participation of women in the life of the Church, both spiritually and socially. Add your voice and support to a national sisterhood of Catholic women who promote awareness and respond to political and social issues that affect all Canadians. **Your membership makes our voice stronger.**

Our Core Values include: Faith - following Catholic teaching; Service - local, national and international; and, Social Justice - actively involved in society. We as league members strive to be a vital participant in the Church, a valued partner for social justice, a respected advocate at all government levels and a strong global voice to affect changes to the wrongs that ail our world today. Our first general meeting of 2020 will be held on Sunday, January 26 at 1:00 pm at the St. Bonaventure Parish Centre and our guest speaker is Professor Dennis O'Hara who will be speaking on Theology of Ecology, a timely discussion on our troubled environment.

Time is precious, and we understand you may not be able to attend meetings, but you can make a difference by adding your voice to ours. The annual membership cost is \$25 and is open to all women. For more information about the League and to explore the joys of membership, please visit: www.cwl.ca <<http://www.cwl.ca>



The Knights of Columbus – St. Francis Council 5080 was first established in 1961 to assist the local communities and the parish by collectively donating volunteer hours, financial assistance by way of organizing programs in promoting faith, charity and assistance. We serve the parish and community of St. Bonaventure in North York volunteering over 5,000 hours yearly and driving fund raising activities to support local catholic charities.

The Knights of Columbus offers men a place to lead their families and communities in faith and service and put their Faith into Action. Knights of Columbus members, parishes and families have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference through various programs. Organized into faith, family, Community and Life categories, the Faith in Action program model empowers Knights to come together to share faith, celebrate fraternity with loved ones, and do what we do best – stand shoulder to shoulder in service to the community and to defend life at all stages and in every condition.

Our council actively organizes parish BBQs and breakfasts, as well as serving at the local food bank and the Good Shepherd Refuge. We are also involved in many other programs such as assisting the State Board in the Annual Charities Lottery, assisting the Special Olympics, conducting basketball free throw within several schools to foster friendly competition among youth, and we also provide winter coats for underprivileged kids.

Recently, in cooperation with Mt. Sinai Hospital c/o Norma Layno of St. Bonaventure Parish working with St. Francis Council and fully sponsored by Stopeport Corp. a full \$220,000.00 shipping container containing Ultrasound Equipment & Medical Supplies was forwarded to the Franciscan Hospital Mission in Ghana, Africa.

We further help with donations towards the Franciscan Sponsoring Program to new Friars.



St. Bonaventure Baseball League (SBBL) is a spring baseball league and has been around for 60 years. Players range in age from JK to Grade 8. Last year, we had over 160 players registered, with waiting lists for all divisions. While the majority of the players are from the parish, it is open to all children in the local community. Our motto is community, fair play, respect, learning and fun.

Our youngest players (JK to Grade 2) participate in the T-Ball division. The next division is our Rookie Ball division (Grades 3 to 5), where players hit balls pitched by their coaches. The eldest division is our Softball division (Grades 6 to 8). At this level, players play games that are closest to the regular game with players pitching to opponents and umpires calling balls and strikes.

SBBL also has umpires who are generally former players now in high school. They are paid a stipend for each game and are provided with training. High School youth are also provided with the opportunity to earn volunteer hours by becoming youth coaches. They help the adult coaches with running the practices and with the games.

Each team needs two adult coaches. In the past few years, it has been a struggle to get enough coaches to help. The weekly commitment time is one 75-minute practice, one 2-3-hour game (depending on the division), and 30 minutes for emailing and co-ordination. The season runs from mid-April to the end of June. It is a wonderful league and a great way to meet your fellow parishioners. Experience is not necessary, nor do you have children playing in the league.

Our end of season Finals Day is a picnic and fair open to the whole parish. The championship games for each division are played and trophies awarded.



The Community Share Food Bank is located at 33 Overland Drive in the hall of The Ascension Church. St. Bonaventure has been a constant supporter of the food bank since it opened 15 years ago. As you can imagine the need for the food banks

grows every year and we welcome those who come to our door in need of a hand up. We endeavor to treat patrons and volunteers with respect and dignity. Community Share has no government funding and no paid staff. We operate strictly by the kindness of individuals, community support and corporate donations. The program has expanded to more than a food bank as we are providing a healthy breakfast to our patrons on a Tuesday morning. It is our hope to extend this service to Saturday. All new programs are a challenge but with the help of our dedicated volunteers they will become a reality. We strive to do better and build a place where neighbours feel welcome.

We thank the parishioners who support the food bank throughout the year. During Advent parishioners have been amazingly generous in their response to the “Giving Tree”. Your generosity is a blessing to a stranger. To learn more please visit our website: communitysharefoodbank.ca

