



# Monthly Newsletter

## (2025 - 2026) Year A: The Gospel of Matthew

By Pat Waters



The Catholic Liturgical Year is the Church's annual calendar beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent and ending with the Feast of Christ the King. It consists of the cycle of liturgical days and seasons that determine when feast days, including celebrations of saints, are to be observed and which portions of scripture are to be read. The cycle of readings follows a three-year cycle for

Sundays (Years A, B and C) and a two-year cycle for weekdays (Years I and II). The Liturgical year 2026 is Liturgical Year A which began on November 30, 2025, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent and will end with the feast of Christ the King, November 22, 2026. The weekday liturgical calendar follows a two-year cycle (Year I for odd years and Year II for even) for Old Testament readings and a semi-continuous Gospel Reading (Mark, Luke, John in Easter) in Ordinary Time, with special readings for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter seasons. Based on this schedule, this year we will be following Year A for Sunday liturgies and Year II for weekdays.

The Sunday readings follow a three-year cycle of the New Testament writers as follows:

- Year A: The Gospel of Matthew
- Year B: The Gospel of Mark
- Year C: The Gospel of Luke

The Gospel of John which differs significantly in style and structure from the synoptic gospels, is not assigned a year. Instead, it is proclaimed during key liturgical seasons across all three years of the cycle.

The Gospel of Matthew, which we will hear proclaimed throughout this year, although placed chronologically first in the New Testament, is most likely a revised and expanded version of Mark. By supplementing Mark's writing with accounts of the life of Jesus he himself has heard (the infancy narrative and

the Sermon on the Mount) Matthew writes a gospel with new focus and flavour. Matthew is believed to be the tax-collector named in the Gospel; however, scholars believe that the actual composition of the Gospel took place well after the lifetime of Jesus and through a complex process.

Matthew's community was Jewish and an important feature of Matthews' Gospel is his presentation of Jesus as the fulfilment of scripture, making it clear that the expectations of the Messiah have now been fulfilled. He wrote around 85-90 CE dating this gospel after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 A.D. This Gospel attempts to reconcile the community's Jewish heritage with the reality of Jesus' life. Matthew's is the Gospel of the risen, Cosmic Christ. The Messiah, son of Abraham, son of David, Son of Man, Son of God, who fulfills all messianic expectations of his death and resurrection, is present in the reading or proclamation of the Gospel; ***"for where two or three are gathered in my name I am there among them."*** (Mt 18:20)



Jesus is God's chosen, powerful in word and deed. We need not fear for the Lord who is to come is already with his Church; ***"remember I am with you always until the end of the age"*** (Mt 28:20). This would be a good year to become more familiar with Matthew's teachings by reading the Gospel According to Matthew in your Bible or for a more intensive re-



view of the Bible tune into the **The Bible In A Year** podcast of Ascension Press with **Father Mike Schmitz**.



## Christmas Isn't Over – Continue to Gaze upon the Poverty of the Nativity Scene

St. Francis of Assisi created a creche, or manger scene, in Greccio, north of Rome, in 1223. But it didn't have all the components that we think of today in a manger scene. His first biographers agree that there was simply: a remote cave, an ox, a donkey, and a small manger with real hay in it. Nobody was dressed up as Mary or Joseph, or as an angel or shepherd. There was no infant or doll in the manger.

Francis wanted to emphasize **the poverty and humility** of the Nativity. Pope Francis confirmed those emphasizes in his 2019 Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum*: 'On the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene.' From Greccio, at the Shrine of the Nativity, Pope Francis wrote, "... Fifteen days before Christmas, St. Francis asked a local man named John to help him realize his desire "to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem, to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of His infant needs, how He lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, He was laid upon a bed of hay". Thomas of Celano, *First Life*, 30 ... his faithful friend went immediately to prepare all that the Saint had asked. On December 25, friars came to Greccio from various parts, together with people from the farmsteads in the area, who brought flowers and torches to light up that holy night. When Francis arrived, he found a manger full of hay, an ox and a donkey. All those present experienced a new and indescribable joy in the presence of the Christmas scene. **The priest then solemnly celebrated the Eucharist over the manger, showing the bond between the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist. At Greccio there were no statues; the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present.**



The image suggests that there was a child in the manger at Greccio. There was not - except for those who saw the miracle. The people shown are observers, not Mary or Joseph, or shepherds.

*This is how our tradition began: with everyone gathered in joy around the cave, with **no distance between the original event and those sharing in its mystery.***

Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of Saint Francis, notes that this simple and moving scene was accompanied by the gift of a marvellous vision: **one of those present saw the Baby Jesus Himself lying in the manger.** From the nativity scene of that Christmas in 1223, "everyone went home with joy"... *Admirabile Signum* #2

The Church continues to celebrate the Christmas Season until the Baptism of Jesus, (this year January 11). As we continue - all year - every day - to reflect on the humility and poverty of the Nativity in Jerusalem, consider four of Pope Francis' observations in *Admirabile Signum*.

1. to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he was laid upon a bed of hay
2. The priest then solemnly celebrated the Eucharist over the manger, showing the bond between the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist.
3. there were no statues; the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present.
4. one of those present saw the Baby Jesus Himself lying in the manger.

Pope Francis summarized, "... , from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has **invited us to "feel" and "touch" the poverty that God's Son took upon Himself in the Incarnation. Implicitly, it summons us to follow Him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet Him and serve Him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need...**" (cf. Mt 25:31-46). *Admirabile Signum*, #3

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**"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience"**  
**(Colossians 3:12)**

**The Pope's Prayer**  
**Intention for January**  
**For prayer with the**  
**Word of God:**

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

To read more of the Pope's Prayer Intentions, visit

<https://www.popesprayer.va/>



**PRAYER for JANUARY**

Lord God, thank You for speaking to us through the Scriptures.

Open our hearts and minds to listen attentively, reflect deeply, and live according to Your Word so that we may bear witness to Your love and be nourished by Your truth.

May Your Word be a constant source of strength and **hope in our communities**.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



We welcome the newest members of our parish family who were baptized in December:

Marcus Angelo Strazzella

Gianna Marisa Evangelista

Alonzo Tomas Mascarinas Bernardez

**Prayer for Child's Baptism:**

Heavenly Father, surround these children with Your love and protection. Fill Your little ones with the Holy Spirit and receive these children into the family of Your church, that they may walk with us in the way of Christ, and grow in the knowledge of Your love.

Amen.

In Memoriam

We remember the recently departed faithful of our parish:

Ed Yuhasz

Morris Clarke

Norm Atkins



Let Us Pray:

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

## St. Ann's School 1915 - 1993

Port Dalhousie's original St. Ann's School, a lovely character-filled building, stood at the corner of Elgin and Dalhousie for eight decades. Built in 1915, it was a two-storey red brick and stone building situated on a leafy tree-edged yard across the street from Star of the Sea Church.

This solid building replaced a modest one-storey frame schoolhouse that served as the Port Dalhousie separate school from 1877 until the opening of the new school in 1915. This old frame schoolhouse was built in 1870 and served originally as the Port Dalhousie public school until replaced in 1877 by a new public school on Main Street (later known as McArthur School). Now redundant, this frame schoolhouse (originally located at the north-west corner of Dalhousie and Elgin) was then purchased by Port's Catholic Church in 1877 and moved around the corner to Elgin Street to be the separate school from 1877 to 1915. Remarkably, this old schoolhouse is still located there, at 31-35 Elgin Street, now altered to be apartments. This modest but historic building has outlived both the old St. Ann's and McArthur Schools.

The completion of the first St. Ann's school was a significant achievement and milestone for Port Dalhousie's Catholic community which numbered about 75 families at that time. A large ceremony attended by many community members marked this achievement. At the laying of the new school's cornerstone on July 11, 1915, Dean Denis Morris blessed the cornerstone and spoke about the importance of Catholic education. The president of Niagara University, Rev. N. A. Brennan, gave a sermon in which he stated that "This structure is to stand for Catholic truths, Catholic principles, and Catholic maxims."

The original St. Ann's had only two classrooms on the first floor, with cloakrooms for coats and boots. On the second floor was the spacious St. Ann's Hall with a stage at one end, used for concerts, plays, performances, ceremonies and meetings. (This would later be altered to make two more classrooms). Wainscoting, hardwood floors, and tall windows were featured throughout the school. A broad wooden staircase led from the first to the second floor, its polished wood stairs and bannisters worn over the decades by the footsteps and hands of the many that used it. There were also two washrooms, a basement, and a staff room upstairs.

Over the decades, St. Ann's educated

generations of Catholic children in Port, its central location in the village by the church contributing to its active role in the community. Reports of its school board meetings were featured regularly in The Standard, giving glimpses into school and community life. In December 1942, for example, St. Ann's school board decided to purchase a new radio for the school. The school secretary, Mrs. Julia Carr, "purchased one immediately and as a result the pupils are privileged to hear daily broadcasts of the 'School of the Air of the Americas' at 10 a.m. each school day." The Inspector's Report at that time showed that "the school's equipment ranks among the highest in the inspectorate" having "a good piano, a splendid victrola and a full library of music appreciation, a reflectoscope, and fiction books of 1217 volumes." The report concluded that "the teachers and pupils are indeed fortunate in possessing all these advantages. The credit reflects on the board and the separate school rate payers in the village."

Construction of an addition "of modern design" for the school began in 1956, completed and ready for use in January 1957. The building expanded with three new classrooms, a principal's office, and two new washrooms. A notable feature was the addition's central hallway which extended the full height of the building with amber stained glass windows for light.



Those of us who attended the old school building have many fond memories: the tree-edged school yard, the sound of the heavy wooden front doors, the wooden floors and large windows, the desks with inkwells and wrought iron legs, the short walk across the street to Mass, the many holy statues and framed pictures on the walls, the baseball diamond by the back of the bowling alley, the metal fire escape on the building's south exterior wall, the

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unique and elegant water fountain in the front hall, and the basement where we sometimes had gym class and watched films, concerts, and performances, attended Brownie meetings, and where the kids who lived “over the bridges” ate their lunch.

In June 1993, the old St. Ann’s was closed, to be replaced by a new school on Main Street, and was demolished in 1999. Sadly it was decided to discard the school that had anchored the Catholic community in Port for decades, and which held within its walls so much of the history of the parish and the community. Today Portview Village, a seniors’ life-lease building,

occupies the site.

The painting of the old St. Ann’s was done in 1992 to mark the retirement of Brian Egan, the long-time and beloved custodian of St. Ann’s from 1960 to 1992. Thank you to Mrs. Ruth Egan for sharing the image, and to Anita (Egan) Foran for helping with this. The painting was done by Mary (Prudden) Mandatori. A great source for more information on and photos of the old St. Ann’s is a book put together by Anita Foran in 1993, St. Ann School 1915 -1993, available in the St. Catharines Public Library.

*By Nancy Cameron, Port Dalhousie Historian*

## Saint Angela Merici, Virgin

(1474 – 1540)

**Feast Day: January 27**

Patron Saint of: the sick, the physically challenged, and those grieving the loss of parents



Have you ever wondered if there is a saint in the Catholic Church that has the same name as you? I have and upon investigation, have found out that there is indeed a Saint Angela. Here is her story.

Angela Merici was born in Desenzano located on Lake Garda in northern Italy, the youngest of four children. Sadly, Angela lost both parents and her older sister at a young

age and went to live with an uncle in nearby Salò. Deeply devoted to prayer and desiring a simple life, at the age of thirteen Angela joined the third order of St Francis, an order for the laity, and wore a brown robe, a white veil and lived a life of poverty.

In her late teens, upon the death of her uncle, she was invited to live with a widow in Brescia where she became a spiritual advisor for a group of men and women committed to serving those in need.

In 1524, Angela embarked on a journey to the Holy Land. On the way, she suddenly became blind on the island of Crete. She insisted on continuing the journey so that she could “see” the sites spiritually. On the way back, she stopped at the same spot where she became blind, prayed before a crucifix and was cured of her blindness. This is why she is patron saint of the sick.

While living in Brescia, she noticed that because of the Italian Wars during her time, many girls became orphaned, having to live on the streets which left them subject to abuse. Angela had a vision that she should

form a community to educate girls and young women.

In 1535, Angela, along with 12 women, founded the Company of St Ursula, a group of women who lived in the community, not a convent. They did not wear a habit and did not take any formal vows. However, they did follow a lifestyle of chastity, poverty and obedience. The Ursulines made it their mission to catechize girls to become good wives and mothers. Why St Ursula? Most likely because St Ursula, a fourth century martyr, was venerated as a leader of women. Angela and the Ursulines believed that society could be changed beginning in the home by raising women to build strong Christian families. She is quoted as saying, **“Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family.”** She and the religious “sisters” taught and prayed with girls in their own neighbourhoods and homes, using the method of gentle persuasion over force.

The Ursuline order is the first and oldest teaching order of women in the Church and continues to this day around the world in close to 40 countries. This order came to Quebec, Canada, via St Marie de l’Incarnation in 1639.

St Angela Merici died quietly on January 27, 1540. Her body is interred at the Church of Sant’Afra in Brescia, Italy. St Angela was canonized in 1807 by Pope Pius VII.

*Loving God, like St Angela, guide us to value the importance of nurturing the mind, body and soul.*

*Help us to be strong faithful leaders.*

*Open our eyes to the needs of others that we may serve our sisters and brothers with compassion. Amen*

*By Angela Van Kralingen*



# Indigenous Artifacts Returned

shared by Wilma Vanderzwaag

“This gesture is a gift freely given—an act of reconciliation rooted in the grace of the Jubilee Year of Hope. A gift, unlike restitution, is offered in freedom and friendship, as a sign of renewed

relationship and mutual respect between the Church and Indigenous Peoples.”

*Archbishop Richard Smith, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops*

On November 15, 2025 Pope Leo XIV met with Bishop Pierre Goudreault, Bishop of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, Archbishop Richard Smith, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and Fr. Jean Vezina, General Secretary of the CCCB to discuss returning to the Canadian Bishops sixty-two Indigenous artifacts. The return of these items was the wish of Pope Francis before his passing. It is a significant step in the process of reconciliation and follows the historic apology by His Holiness in 2022 for the Catholic Church’s role in the intergenerational trauma of residential schools in Canada.

The sixty-two artifacts were part of an offering received on the occasion of the Vatican Missionary

Exhibition of 1925 by Catholic missionaries to bear witness to the faith and cultural richness of peoples in the various communities.

These artifacts, accompanied by information in the possession of the Vatican Museums, which verify their origins and the circumstances of their transportation to Rome. Leaders of the Assembly of First Nations, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Métis National Council were in Montreal to receive the gifts when they arrived in Canada on December 6, 2025. Local First Nations leadership held ceremony to welcome the sacred items and First Nations bundles back to Canada. They were then transported to the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau for examination.

“Our relatives are finally home. For First Nations, these are not only artifacts. They are sacred, living items. My thoughts are with all the Elders and First Nations that have made the efforts to bring them back to our traditional territories. Today is an important moment, but it is far from the end. Our hope is that our shared work sets an example of a respectful approach to repatriation and reconciliation that will see more items returned to their Nations.”

*National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, Assembly of First Nation*



Saturday, November 29, 2025



Many thanks to Karen (2nd from the right) for coordinating this wonderful event!





## Alpha 2025

The third annual Alpha Retreat was held on Saturday December 13th at the Star of the Sea parish hall. 12 people came together for a full day of faith-filled reflection, connection, and spiritual renewal.

The day's activities included--watching inspirational films about the Holy Spirit, Taizé song, Eucharistic Adoration, Reconciliation, Lectio Divina scripture reading, scripture rock painting and walking a mini prayer labyrinth. These activities encouraged reflection, openness, and a deeper connection with God and one another. Delicious food was catered from Joe Feta's, with time set aside to enjoy discussion and fellowship.

Please consider joining us online or in-person for the full 11-week Alpha program and/or for the Alpha retreat in Fall 2026! For more information, email [joyce@bott.ca](mailto:joyce@bott.ca).



Canadian Council  
for Refugees  
Conseil canadien  
pour les réfugiés

## Chez Marie Refugee Assistance Centre

Dear Father Richard and parishioners of Star of the Sea;  
It is impossible to adequately thank you for the amazing Christmas baskets you prepared for each of our families at Chez Marie. Thank you for your ongoing care and concern for our Refugee families.

We are deeply grateful,

Sr. Judy Carroll and Maria Toussaint  
Co-coordinators Chez Marie





## Thank you from the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Star of the Sea Church

Again this year SVDP Star of the Sea was able to bring some Christmas cheer to many families and individuals in our parish area due to the generosity of many within our church community.

Those wishing to receive a Christmas food basket registered with us in October and November. We gave out 58 food baskets filled with food, socks and special items for Christmas such as candy canes, cookies and pancake mix with maple syrup. This year we were given fresh apples to add to each hamper. Each basket was topped with a beautiful bag of hand crafted boxes filled with chocolates. We are blessed with a very creative angel in our parish who makes these each year for our families. Food vouchers from President's Choice/ No Frills and Walmart were given to everyone receiving a basket. Families received \$125 in food vouchers and individuals were given \$75. Any extra Christmas treats were passed on to Chez Marie so that their families could enjoy a little extra cheer.



Throughout the year SVDP continues to help those in need in our parish through the support of many individuals and groups. St. Teresa and St. Ann schools help us keep our cupboards full with their food drives at Thanksgiving and Easter. The St. Patrick's Shamrock Bingo Club supports us throughout the year with generous donations that have allowed us to continue to serve those in need in our parish.

We continue to have the constant support of the parishioners of Star of the Sea Church. Your weekly contributions and your incredible generosity at Christmas are very appreciated and accepted with gratitude.

Finally, we want to thank Father Richard who has always supported and encouraged the work of St. Vincent de Paul in our parish.

With gratitude to everyone who has allowed us to make Christmas a little merrier for others, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

***Merry Christmas from your St. Vincent de Paul!***

*Shared by Linda Leonard*



## **Waiting in Hope Advent Retreat Saturday, December 6, 2025**

Thank you to all who participated in Saturday's Advent Retreat and CWL Mass. We welcomed several parishioners who are not yet members of our Council.

Thanks go out to Linda Dirks who prepared a thoughtful, prayerful and meaningful presentation. Also, thanks to all the ladies who helped with the set-up of the space and those who helped in the kitchen! God bless you all!



*Shared by Jayne Evans, CWL Star of the Sea President*