



**CHRISTMAS: THE SIMPLICITY AND VULNERABILITY OF
GOD**

Christmas reveals to us the utter Vulnerability of God. As St Paul says in Phil 2, God empties Himself in the human form and lives among us depending on the mercy and compassion of not only humans but also of the animals among whom He was born. Christmas reveals to us the poverty of God and the rejection He suffered. The Angel says to the shepherds in the field: “Here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger” (Lk 2:12). Usually babies are found at home and not in stables. What is extraordinary about the birth of the Son of God is the exceptional poverty of the surroundings. Today, our children and youth find it very difficult to understand the true meaning of Christmas, because they live amidst plenty. They are able to buy anything as “Last- Minute Deals” are continually offered. At Christmas their wardrobes get filled with materials they don’t require at all for years to come. We are in a mad rush that we hardly have any time to teach our children the true story of Christmas, which is the story of God’s self-giving love. Consumerism and abundance make God-experience impossible. That is why Jesus showed up in this world as a vulnerable and defenseless baby. Abundance and plenty will drive our children further away from God, and will make them callous to the needs of others. In Hebrew language, ‘Bethlehem’ means the ‘House of Bread.’ When Jesus is born into our hearts, He becomes our Bread. It is Jesus on whom we feed on. May this Christmas be a blessing for all of us to grow closer to God by being fed by the gospel values of Jesus. Wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas. Fr. Vargheese.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)	St. Columba Iona	4 p.m.	Fr. Vargheese
Tuesday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)	St. Andrew's Boisdale	4 p.m.	Fr. Doug
Tuesday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)	St. Mary's Frenchvale	4 p.m.	Fr. Everett
Tuesday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)	St. Mary's Frenchvale	Midnight	Fr. Vargheese
Tuesday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)	St. Michael's Baddeck	7 p.m.	Fr. Angus
Tuesday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)	Queen of the World Wagmatcook	7 p.m.	Fr. Vargheese
Wednesday, Dec. 25 (Christmas Day)	St. Michael's Baddeck	10 a.m.	Fr. Vargheese

THE PARISH COMMUNITIES OFFER PRAYER & SYMPATHY TO: The Family of Margaret 'Isabel' Quinn, Sydney, formerly from Grand Narrows. May she rest in peace. Amen.

ST. ANDREW'S, BOISDALE: Christmas cleaning and decorating will take place on Sunday, December 22, at 2 p.m.

ST. COLUMBA CHURCH, IONA: Decorating the Church for Christmas will be held after the 4 p.m. Mass this Saturday, Dec. 21.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT ST. MARY, FRENCHVALE: All Children welcome! There will be one practice for the Christmas pageant. This will happen immediately following Mass on Saturday, December 21, (Approximately 6:45). If folks are decorating the church we will practice in the basement. Pageant participants should try to be at the church at 3:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve. If you will not be able to make Practice or have any questions call Carol at 902-241-5435.

DIOCESAN PRAYER FOR OUR NEW BISHOP: Gracious God, Giver of all spiritual gifts, we are thankful for the gift of our new Bishop, Most Rev. Wayne Kirkpatrick. We, the Community of Believers of the Diocese of Antigonish, trust deeply in your Divine Providence and in your desire to provide for the needs of our diocesan family. May he be filled with zeal for the Gospel as he ministers as one who is gentle, wise, merciful and devoted in love for your people. May we, your Community of Disciples, receive the grace to welcome our new Bishop as our Brother in Christ. As he begins his new Ministry as Bishop of the Diocese of Antigonish, we pray that he be filled with gospel courage, wisdom and discernment. May we welcome him and assure him of our prayer, presence and unconditional support as we begin our new journey of faith together. St. Ninian, Pray for Us.

LET THERE BE LIGHT -- a Christmas Show of inspired festive music on Sunday, December 22, at 7 p.m. at Knox Church Hall, Baddeck, with Michelle Stephens, Joella Foulds & Robyn Cathcart. \$20 per person. Children 12 & under are free. Also, a show on Saturday, December 21, at 7 p.m. at Little Narrows Presbyterian Church, Little Narrows.

PIES: There are still 17 apple pies (No mincemeat) available for purchase from St. Barra Parish. If you wish to do so please call Wendy at 902-725-2525 or Gregory at 902-725-2840 to order.

FAMILY SQUARE DANCE on Saturday, December 28, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. with Boyd and Sheumas MacNeil at Branch 124, Grandona Legion, Iona. Come kick up your heels at our family square dance and help us reboot the square dance tradition of our area. If you don't know the set, don't worry. There will be coaches on hand to help you learn our local set. Come on out for an evening of culture, kinship and fun. This is an event for everyone. Adm. \$8 for 19 years and older. 18 years and under are free (must be accompanied by a parent/guardian). Hosted by Branch 124 Legion. Members and guests of all ages are welcome. The bar will be open.

MINISTRIES - ST. COLUMBA - Tuesday, Dec. 24 - 4 p.m. - Readers - Elizabeth, James. Eucharistic Ministers - Wendy (The Bread), Kaye-Anne (The Cup), Barry (The Cup). Hospitality - Patsy & Lorne, Brad, Timmy. Altar Server - Riley, Katherine, Simon.

Saturday, Dec. 28 - 4 p.m. - Readers - Peggy MacNeil, Shelly. Eucharistic Ministers - Elizabeth (The Bread), Florence (The Cup), Angela (The Cup). Hospitality - John Neil, Timmy, Brad, Hoss. Altar Servers - Grace, Simon.

MINISTRIES - ST. ANDREW'S - Tuesday, Dec. 24 - 4 p.m. - Readers - Paula, Leonard. Eucharistic Minister - Jane. Hospitality - John. Altar Server - Pat.

Saturday, Dec. 28 - 4 p.m. - Readers - Joe, Kenny. Eucharistic Minister - Anne. Hospitality - Joe. Altar Server - Emma.

MINISTRIES - ST. MICHAEL'S - Tuesday, Dec. 24 - 7 p.m. - Readers - Peggy MacKinnon, Bernice Grant. Eucharistic Minister - Charlene Ivany. Church cleaner for the week of December 22 - Jeanette MacDonald.

Sunday, Dec. 29 - 9 a.m. - Readers - Marlene MacLean, Mary Ivey. Eucharistic Minister - Jackie Gauthier. Church cleaner for the week of Dec. 29 - Holly MacInnis.

OFFERINGS St. Columba St. Mary's St. Michael's St. Andrew's (Dec. 14/15)

Envelopes	\$ 640.00	\$ 465.00	\$ 1432.50	\$ 260.00
Loose	66.00		70.00	31.00
DD	92.00	245.00		
Building Fund	25.00			
St. Col. Cem.	10.00			
St. Barra Cem.	100.00			
Flowers	40.00			95.00
Talbot House		20.00		
Initial Off.		10.00		
Cemetery				20.00

