



ARCHDIOCESE *of* KINGSTON

Epiphany of the Lord

My dear faithful of the Archdiocese,

On 8 December 2025, the Archdiocese opened our 200th anniversary year with the celebration of Mass for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. In the past month, the Church has guided us through Advent and the Christmas season reflecting on the birth of our Savior. How often during these celebrations did the readings of the liturgy lead us to the identity of this newborn child? The Church assisted us to marvel at the belief that God's Son was born of the Virgin in poverty and humility. How blessed we are to live this faith and to follow the episodes and events of the Nativity through the lives of John the Baptist, Joseph and Mary.

It was fitting that we began these first weeks our anniversary moving from the Annunciation reading of 8 December to the Christmas Season. In the privacy and intimacy of the Annunciation, Gabriel tells Mary of the identity of this child.

You shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end...therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

In perfect obedience and humility Mary accepts the will of God and becomes the Mother of Jesus born in Bethlehem. In these earliest moments, she alone knows the identity of her son. *With love beyond all telling*, she patiently holds this mystery in her heart accepting God's plan to reveal this knowledge about the child to the world, first to Joseph and then immediately after his birth to the poor, the suffering and those longing for the Messiah. The Christmas mystery of the nativity scene draws us to this child in the same spirit. The creed we professed at the Christmas Mass expresses our faith in the Son of God. Our humble spiritual lives become a sincere manifestation of the desire to know Christ.

This is the sentiment of St. Paul which we chose for our anniversary motto – *to know Christ and the power of his resurrection*.

An ancient Marian hymn of the oriental churches may help us to treasure in our hearts this mystery of the child of Bethlehem. The hymn begins:

*In amazement before all these miracles, I sing to you.
Jesus, incomprehensible Word of God
Jesus, impenetrable Mystery
Jesus, Baby sleeping in the night! (Akathist)*

This ancient hymn allows our hearts to move between the mystery of the infinite, incomprehensible God to the fragility of the sleeping newborn. And in this beautiful tension of marvel in our souls, we appreciate in some small degree how much God empties himself in love to be born in our human condition. The grace of these thoughts strengthens our resolve to know this Jesus.

Christ, through his Holy Church gives to us two primary avenues to encounter Christ and to come to know him, the Gospels and the Eucharist.



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As the weeks of 2026 unfold, the Church will present at Mass the early chapters of St. Mathew's gospel which speak of the beginning of Christ's public ministry. The acts of healing and words of teaching are the grace that open our minds and souls to *know Christ*. Our fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time (1 February 2026) introduce us to the world of the beatitudes, the teaching which reveals Christ's heart and mind to his disciples. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek, the righteousness, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peacemakers. Listen to his words in the Gospels so that he may reveal to each one of us his heart.

The second avenue for us is the Eucharist, the gift of Jesus, body, soul and divinity truly present in the Eucharist. At Sunday Mass, the gospel is proclaimed and the body and blood of our Lord is made present for our nourishment. For this reason, the community of believers gathers on the first day of the week (Sunday). As a natural extension of the Mass, the eucharist is present for our adoration in the tabernacles of our Churches and more intimately in the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at set times in the weekly parish schedule. This is an especially precious gift for our own peace and spiritual well-being. Every age is full of responsibilities and distractions, but few generations have been burdened by the relentless bombardment of distractions as our own. These constant disturbances play havoc with our inner peace and happiness. Many remedies exist, but the stillness and peace of God's presence is precious. The quiet, real presence of God on the altars of our chapels is a source of stable humility and peace and a medicine for debilitating restlessness. Let us dedicate ourselves to increase our devotion to the eucharist through our Sunday Mass and our commitment to a habit of pray, if possible, in the divine presence of the eucharist. This is my great hope and prayer for our anniversary year.

The Church has learned the hard way over the centuries that when she departs from these sources of prayerful divine presence, her apostolate and mission suffer. Only with a heightened desire to know Christ, to listen to his words in the gospels, receive his body and blood and seek the stillness of his presence will the Church find the strength to go out of herself in joy to serve a broken and suffering world.

My dear faithful, know of my continued prayers for this anniversary year for many lasting graces. May the Lord continue to crown this year with his goodness (*Psalms 65.11*).

With prayerful best wishes,

+Michael Mulhall
Archbishop of Kingston