



## CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OTTAWA Christmas 2018

Dear Friends,

Last summer I visited one of the art collections of the Berlin State Museums known as Gemäldegalerie. This compact, interesting gallery (apparently about two kilometres to walk through) holds an internationally famous collection of 13<sup>th</sup> to 18th century European paintings.

The gallery is known for its “scientific” approach to collecting and displaying masterpieces, and usually has about 1,000 paintings on display at any one time, grouped in rooms that allow for brief, rich immersions into the work of European masters, including one of the world’s largest Rembrandt collections.

After a long, extremely hot August day of slogging through the layers of Berlin’s history, the Gemäldegalerie was a welcome, beautiful space to trace the ancient brushstrokes that rendered many remarkable interpretations of life and belief through the ages.

Even though the gallery was relatively small and well thought out (definitely scientific), the dozens of true masterpieces made it difficult to focus. I decided to zoom in on the one or two paintings in each room that first caught my eye, and to take in the rest with more distant appreciation.

The painting you see in the corner of this letter drew my attention. It is called *Die Geburt Christi* (The Nativity) and it was painted by Albrecht Altdorfer in 1513. It depicts a dream-like scene, with the Holy Family sheltering in a derelict stable, three angels singing joyfully above them, another three holding the cloth that cradles the infant Jesus, and another off to the left in a cloud of light, presumably announcing the birth to shepherds.

We see old Joseph, trying to shield the flame of his candle so it won’t blow out, failing to grasp that everything around him, from the shoots of grass to the leaves of the tree, and even the night-sky, is being warmly illuminated by the aura of the Christ Child, which outshines all earthly light.

Can you see yourself in Joseph, nursing a little candle of faith, trying to prevent the winds of troubling things from blowing it out and darkening your spirit? As though it’s up to you to keep your light shining?

Christmas reminds us that faith is a gift from God and not something we have to manufacture for ourselves. Instead of looking to our own small capacity to brighten the darkness of our hearts, Christmas tells us that God gives light to the world, and that God places that light right inside our hearts.

So remember to look to the Christ Child to discover or strengthen your faith: it is his gift to you. And focus on light that catches the eye of your faith: it, too is a gift.

During this Christmastide, and all the seasons of your life, put yourself in places where God loves to be. You can tell where those places are when your faith is awakened and your heart is brightened. Celebrating the Eucharist each week with others who look to Christ for life and light is one particularly good place to be. So are places where you are asked to share in ways that make others feel warmly illuminated by your love.

With very best wishes for a holy and blessed Christmas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shane Parker'.

The Very Reverend Shane Parker  
Dean of Ottawa

## ADVENT, CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY AT THE CATHEDRAL

### **Sunday December 9, Advent II**

8:30am—Holy Eucharist | 10:30am—Choral Eucharist  
4:00pm—O Antiphons

### **Sunday December 16 Advent III**

8:30am—Holy Eucharist | 10:30am—Choral Eucharist  
4:00pm—Traditional Nine Lessons & Carols for Christmas

### **Sunday December 23, Advent IV**

8:30am—Holy Eucharist | 10:30am—Choral Eucharist

### **Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve**

4pm—Eucharist with Pageant for Children of All Ages  
8pm—Choral Eucharist & Proclamation of Christmas Gospel  
11pm—Festal Eucharist

### **Tuesday, December 25, Christmas Day**

9am—Holy Eucharist  
11am—Choral Eucharist with Procession to the Crèche

### **January 1, New Year's Day (The Naming of Jesus)**

Noon—Choral Eucharist with Archbishop Fred Hiltz  
2pm—The Bishop's Levee

### **Sunday, January 6, Epiphany of the Lord**

8:30am—Holy Eucharist | 9:30—Matins  
10:30am—Choral Eucharist

### **Sunday, January 13, Baptism of the Lord**

8:30am—Holy Eucharist  
10:30am—Holy Baptism & Choral Eucharist  
4:00pm—Epiphany Carol Service

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*The photo of Die Geburt Christi by Albrecht Altdorfer was taken at Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, Germany.*