

## Pope Francis Christmas Audience 28 December 2022

Saint Francis de Sales writes as follows: "I imagine I see Solomon on his ivory throne, all beautifully gilded and carved, which, as the Scripture tells us, had no equal in all the kingdoms of the earth neither was there any king that could be compared, for glory and magnificence, with the king that sat upon it.. And yet, I would a hundred times rather see the dear Jesus in his Crib, than all the kings of the world on their thrones." What he says is beautiful. Jesus, the King of the universe, never sat on a throne, never: He was born in a stable wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger; and finally He died on a cross and, wrapped in a sheet, was laid in the tomb. Indeed, the evangelist Luke, in recounting the birth of Jesus, insists a great deal on the detail of the manger. This means that it is very important not only as a logistical detail. But how to understand it as a symbolic element? In order to understand *what kind of Messiah* is He who was born in Bethlehem; what kind of King He is, *Who Jesus is*. Seeing the manger, gazing upon the cross, looking at His life, a life of simplicity, we can understand who Jesus is. Jesus is the Son of God Who saves us by becoming man, like us; stripping Himself of His glory and humbling Himself. We see this mystery concretely in the focal point of the crib, namely in the Child lying in a manger. This is "the sign" that God gives us at Christmas: it was at the time for the shepherds in Bethlehem it is today, and it will always be so. When the angels announce the birth of Jesus, "Go and you will find Him"; and the sign is: You will find a child in a manger. That is the sign. The throne of Jesus is the manger or the street, during His life, preaching; or the Cross at the end of His life. This is the throne of our King. This sign shows us the "style" of God. And what is the style of God? Don't forget, never forget: the style of God is closeness, compassion, and tenderness. This style of God is seen in Jesus. With this style of His, God draws us to Himself. He does not take us by force, He does not impose His truth and justice on us. He does not proselytize us, no! He wants to draw us with love, with tenderness, with compassion. St Francis de Sales writes: "The magnet attracts iron, amber attracts straws. Whether, then, we are iron in our hardness, or straws in our lightness and worthlessness, we must unite ourselves to this little Infant." Our strengths, our weaknesses, only resolve themselves before the crib, before Jesus, or before the Cross. Jesus stripped, Jesus poor; but always with His style of closeness, compassion, and tenderness. God has found the means to attract us however we are: with love. Not a possessive and selfish love, as unfortunately human love so often is. His love is pure gift, pure grace, it is all and only for us, for our good. And so He draws us in, with this unarmed and even disarming love. Because when we see this simplicity of Jesus, we too cast aside the weapons of pride and go, humbly, to ask for salvation, to ask for forgiveness, to ask for light for our lives, in order to be able to move forward. Do not forget the throne of Jesus. The manger and the Cross: this is the throne of Jesus. Another aspect that stands out in the crib is poverty understood as the renunciation of all worldly vanity. When we see the money that is spent on vanity... so much money on worldly vanity; so much effort, so much seeking after vanity; while Jesus makes us see with humility. St Francis de Sales writes: "My God! my daughter, how many holy affections does this birth make rise within our hearts, above all of the perfect renunciation of the goods, the pomps, ... of this world. I do not know whether I find any mystery which so sweetly mingles tenderness with austereness, love with rigour, sweetness with severity." We see all this in the Nativity scene. Yes, let us be careful not to slip into the worldly caricature of Christmas. And this is a problem, because this is Christmas. But today we see that, even if there is "another Christmas," in quotation marks, it is the worldly caricature of Christmas, that reduces Christmas to a sappy, consumerist celebration. We want to celebrate, we want to, but this is not Christmas, Christmas is something else. God's love is not sugar sweet; Jesus' manger shows us that. It is not a hypocritical goodness that hides the pursuit of pleasures and comforts. Our elders, who knew war and also hunger, knew this well: Christmas is joy and celebration, certainly, but in simplicity and austerity. And let us conclude with a thought of St Francis de Sales two days before his death. And he said: "Do you see the baby Jesus in the crib? He accepts all the discomforts of that season, the bitter cold and everything that the Father lets happen to him. He does not refuse the small consolations that his Mother gives him; we are not told that he ever reached out for his Mother's breast, but left everything to her care and concern. So too, we ourselves should neither desire nor refuse anything, but accept all that God sends us, the bitter cold and the discomforts of the season," everything. And here, dear brothers and sisters, is a great teaching, which comes to us from the Child Jesus

## Our Lady of Divine Providence ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**Pastor: Rev. Luis Orlando González**  
**P. Vicar: Rev. Rafael Velázquez**  
**P. Vicar: Rev. Paul Passant**

**1310 Leeward Highway, Providenciales.**  
**P.O. Box 340, Turks & Caicos Islands.**  
**Phone: (+1649) 941-5136**

[www.catholic.tc](http://www.catholic.tc) - [oldpchurch@catholic.tc](mailto:oldpchurch@catholic.tc)



## CHRISTMAS 2023



### HOLY MASS

**Saturday: 05:30 pm English, Church.**

**Sunday: 09:00 am English, Church.**  
**10:30 am Creole, Church.**  
**12:30 pm Spanish, Church.**

**Weekdays: 05:30 pm English, B. Chapel.**

**Fridays: 04:00 pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Rosary.**

**05:30 pm Blue Chapel.**

### SCHEDULE OF SACRAMENTS

**Baptisms: Contact one of the priests in person.**

**Marriage: Call the parish office for preparation before setting a fixed date.**

**Anointing of the Sick: Upon request.**

**Confessions: Everyday before Mass or by appointment.**

Dear brothers and sisters from Providenciales and throughout the TCI, Merry Christmas to you and all your families!

This Christmas 2023, we should reflect on this passage from the Holy Scriptures: "To us (from TCI) a Saviour is born". Once again in the Turks and Caicos Islands, we hear this announcement, despite the passing of centuries, it remains unaltered in all its newness, but for the men and women of the year 2023 does a Saviour still have value and significance? Is a Saviour still necessary for the man who has reached the Moon and Mars and prepares to conquer the universe; for man who explores the secrets of nature without limits and can even decipher the marvelous codes of the human genome? This Christmas, we need special graces to increase our faith to recognize how our Saviour is necessary and fundamental for today's man who has invented interactive communication that spans the virtual ocean of the Internet, and thanks to the most advanced modern media technology, makes Earth, this great common-house, such a small global "village".

Although the man of today appears to be the "confident and autonomous artifact of his own destiny", Benedict XVI said, "people still die of hunger and thirst, disease and poverty in these times of abundance and unchecked consumerism".

There are still brothers and sisters who are enslaved, abused, and offended in their dignity; others, who are victims of racial or religious hatred, people who, due to intolerance and discrimination, political interference, and physical or moral coercion are prevented from freely professing their faith in countries like Nicaragua and many others. Some people see their own bodies and the bodies of their loved ones, especially children, martyred by the use of weapons, terrorism, and all manner of violence. We can't ignore also in this island and many other places the immigrants that are forced to abandon their homes and homeland in search of living conditions more worthy of human dignity. Also, those who are misled by false prophets of "happiness", those who become slaves of alcohol

or drugs, human traffic of women, those who "choose death thinking they are praising life". Therefore, we need graces from Our Savior born for us this Christmas 2023.

It is on Christmas Day, today, "the true light, which illuminates all humanity comes into the world". Today, on this very day, Christ comes once again to be "among his people". Today again, this very day "our Saviour is born into the world" because he knows that we need him. Because God is love and He loves us.

Blessings,

Fr. Orlando



**HOLY HOUR  
FRIDAYS**

**4:00 pm – 5:00pm.**

**Rosary in three languages and reflection and meditation on the Holy Eucharist.**



**NEW YEAR**

**Sunday, Dec 31st:  
05:30 pm. - English**

**Monday, Jan 1st:  
09:00 am - English  
11:00 am - Multilingual**

**Parish Events Dec. 24-31**

**Sunday Holy Mass: 09:00 am.10:30am.  
Christmas Eve , 5:30m English,  
Midnight Mass Multilingual**

**Monday Christmas day**

09:00am Mass in English, Church  
11:00am Multilingual mass

**Tuesday St. Stephen, Protomartyr  
D. Mass Chapel**

05:30 pm

**Wednesday St. John the Evangelist  
D. Mass Chapel**

05:30 pm

**Thursday Holy Innocents  
D. Mass Chapel**

05:30 pm

**Friday St. Thomas Abeckett  
Adoration, Blue Chapel  
D. Mass Chapel**

04:00pm  
05:30pm

**Saturday Mass Church  
NCW Eucharist**

05:30pm  
07:00pm



**School Notes**

Holy Family Academy  
Tel: (+1649) 941-7875



**Christmas Break**

**Dec. 20- Jan. 2**

**School Closed**

**Jan. 3**

**Back to School**

**[www.hfa.catholic.tc](http://www.hfa.catholic.tc)**

**SPONSORS / BENEFACTORS**

We continue to look for donations and sponsors to support our **Scholarship Program** and help the school with necessary supplies.

Your sponsorship payment can be done through direct deposit or bank transfer or by donating any of the items below.

- Scientific Calculators
- Projectors and projector screens
- Projector stands
- Erasable markers and erasers
- Art Supplies
- Printing Paper
- Sport supplies
- AA Batteries
- Asthma Inhalers & AED



Click on our **Wish List** or scan the code to see more!