

115TH PARISH ANNIVERSARY UPDATE

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This year marks a monumental milestone in the life of our spiritual family. With hearts full of joy and gratitude, we formally invite each of you to participate in the year-long celebration of the 115th Anniversary of the Canonical Erection of our Parish, St. Mary's Parish.

For more than a century, our parish has stood as a beacon of faith, a sanctuary of hope, and a home of love. To be canonically erected means we were formally established as a permanent household of faith within the larger Church. For 115 years, God has gathered us here to feed us with His Word and Sacraments.

The Scriptural Spirit of Jubilee

In the sacred tradition of Scripture, an anniversary of this magnitude is intimately tied to the concept of Jubilee. In Leviticus 25, God commanded His people to observe holy milestones as times of spiritual renewal, thanksgiving, and restoration. A Jubilee is an invitation to:

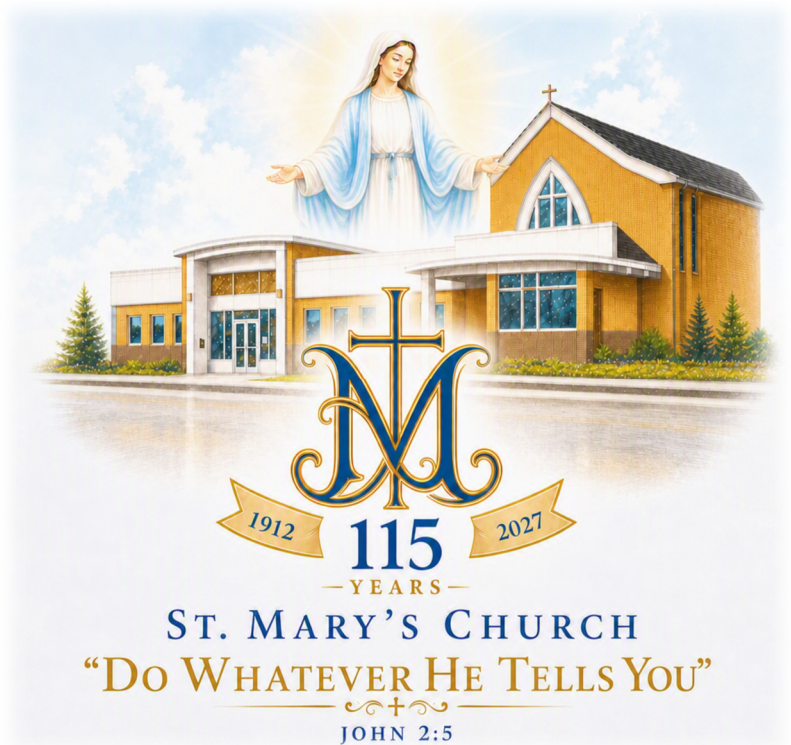
Remember: To look back with gratitude at the foundations laid by those who came before us.

Renew: To let go of past burdens, forgive grievances, and refresh our personal relationship with God.

Return: To welcome back any who have drifted away, ensuring that everyone has a place at the family table.

Our 115th anniversary is not merely a celebration of historical dates or brick-and-mortar buildings; it is not merely about looking at the past; it is a profound opportunity to recognize God's enduring faithfulness in the present and to renew our commitment to the future. This celebration is our Parish's local year of favour.

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Our Anniversary Theme: “Do whatever He tells you.” (John 2:5)

As a parish dedicated to the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we look directly to our Mother to guide our celebrations. Our theme for this year-long event comes from her final recorded words in Sacred Scripture, spoken at the Wedding at Cana. When the wine ran out, Mary did not offer a human solution; she pointed the servants directly to her Son. In our own lives, when our strength runs low or our faith feels dry, Mary gives us the exact same instruction: **“Do whatever He tells you.”** Throughout this anniversary year, we are called to act like those biblical servants. We are called to bring our ordinary "water"—our daily prayers, our unique talents, our sacrifices, and our service—and fill our parish jars to the brim. When we listen to Jesus and obey His word, He transforms our everyday offerings into the "choice wine" of miraculous grace, joy, and communal renewal.

An Invitation to Active Participation

This anniversary belongs to every single one of us. No matter your age, how long you have been a member, or where you find yourself on your spiritual journey, you are a very important part of St. Mary's Parish, Fort Frances. We invite you to participate fully in our year-long calendar of events, which will include special liturgical celebrations, moments of deep spiritual formation, community outreach initiatives, and parish fellowships. Let us open our hearts to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Let us honor the legacy of our past by building a vibrant, obedient, and loving future. Together, under the mantle of Our Blessed Mother, let us move forward with complete trust, ready to do whatever He (Our Lord Jesus) tells us.

May God bless St. Mary's Parish, and may He pour out His abundant graces upon you and your families during this holy Jubilee year!

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Kevin C. Ezeobi, SMMM

St. Mary's Parish, Fort Frances.



Save the Date

We will mark the beginning of our 115th anniversary celebrations with our first Parish Feast Day mass on Sunday, September 13th at 11:00 a.m. Lunch and fellowship to follow mass.



DATES TO REMEMBER

Schedule of Special Masses for 115th Anniversary Year

Sunday, September 13th, 2026 – For anniversary year and first parish feast day

Friday, October 9th, 2026 – For those who received the faith, the first Christians

Friday, November 6th, 2026 – For deceased priests and deceased members of St. Mary's (Mass of the dead)

Wednesday, December 9th, 2026 – For all parishioners

Friday, January 8th, 2027 – For past priests (living) that served at St. Mary's Church

Thursday, February 11th, 2027 – For the sick

Wednesday, March 10th, 2027 – For those who have served our parish in various capacities (lectors, altar servers, musicians, Catholic Women's League, Knights of Columbus, benefactors, benefactresses, etc.)

Friday, April 9th, 2027 – For married couples

Tuesday, May 4th, 2027 – For the progress of our parish, for Fr. Kevin and our parishioners

Monday, May 31st, 2027 – Rosary procession and mass (Feast of Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary)

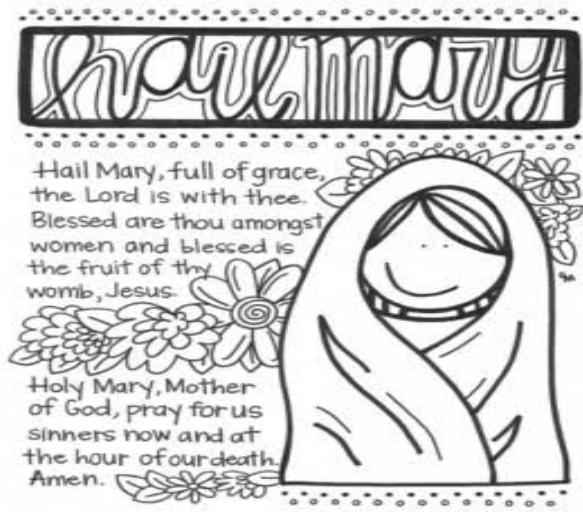
Tuesday, June 8th, 2027 – For the youth and children of our parish & for the Catholic school and educators

Sunday, July 25th, 2027 – For the elderly (Grandparents and Elderly day)

Friday, August 13th, 2027 – For continuous propagation of faith in our parish

Wednesday, September 8th, 2027 – Mass of Thanksgiving with Bishop Campeau

KIDS CORNER



USING THE FOLLOWING WORDS, FILL IN THE BLANKS:

GABRIEL * ANNE * SIN * JOSEPH * JESUS * EMMANUEL

What is the name of Mary's Mother?

Who is the angel who appeared to Mary?

What's the name of Mary's husband?

Mary conceived without original ____?

_____ is the Hebrew name which appears in the Book of Isaiah and the Gospel according to Matthew that means "God is with us."

The son of Mary shall be named _____.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES

HISTORY COMMITTEE

St. Mary's Parish community possesses a rich history that extends from the 1700s when the first missionaries entered the Rainy Lake region by canoe to the formation of the Catholic schools and churches we enjoy in the present. The historical committee has been busy looking through church and diocesan archives, as well as museum documents to create a booklet for parishioners to commemorate this anniversary. The booklet will contain a list of the religious who served our parish, as well as a timeline of first events which are significant to our parish.

Starting in September 2026 look for "historical facts" which will be posted each week in our church bulletin. We have an amazing history and look forward to sharing it with you!



LITURGICAL/SPIRITUAL COMMITTEE

The Liturgical and Spiritual Committee is actively preparing the Special Masses and prayer events for our anniversary year. Themes, readings, and special blessings are being organized, and coordination with parish ministries is underway. More details will be shared each month in the bulletin. Father Kevin has written a beautiful special anniversary prayer that can be prayed throughout the anniversary year. Please keep an eye out for prayer cards coming soon!

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Social Committee has been busy preparing hospitality and community-building events for our anniversary year to ensure our parish is warm and welcoming for all. Planning is well underway for a parish potluck on Sunday, September 13th, which will take place after 11:00 a.m. Mass to celebrate St. Mary's Parish first-ever parish feast day and officially kick off our anniversary-year festivities. More details will be shared as the celebration approaches. Watch the bulletin for details about parish events to celebrate throughout the anniversary year.

SPECIAL PROJECT COMMITTEE

A special project committee has been established to inform and support the planning of a Marian Grotto for St. Mary's Parish. The Grotto will serve as a lasting spiritual landmark for our parish to honor and commemorate our 115th anniversary year. As we look to the future faith at St. Mary's, we recognize a deep need for a permanent, sacred space of peace, healing and prayer on our parish grounds. The new Grotto will feature a beautifully landscaped stone sanctuary housing a statue of Our Lady, a quiet space for the Rosary, and private reflection. It will stand as a visible testament to our 115-year legacy, a special gift to our Blessed Mother for journeying with our Parish all these years. More information about how you can support the project is coming soon, stay tuned!

If you are interested in participating in any of the sub-committees or assisting with any anniversary year activities, please contact the parish office.