

ON EAGLES WINGS

President-elect Joseph R. Biden quoted “On Eagle’s Wings” during his first speech as president-elect. He referred to it as a hymn that has meant a lot to his family. Most of us are familiar with it as a standard so often used at Catholic funerals, but in many other situations as well.

“Eagle’s Wings” was written by Fr. Michael Joncas from the Archdiocese of St. Paul, Minnesota. This is the same Fr. Joncas who was commissioned a few years ago by our pastor, Fr. Pelc, to write a parish Centennial hymn for us at St. Ambrose: *Christus Est Nobis Omnia*. In the Body of Christ, even though it is a very big world, we are very close to one another.

In an interview with *America Magazine*, Father Joncas, the hymn’s composer, “said that he was honored and humbled” to hear the President Elect quote ‘On Eagle’s Wings’ as he set out his initial vision for the country. I pray that the song can serve in some way to help the healing of our nation,” Joncas said.

While Catholics can argue ceaselessly over a number of issues, we hold a few unshakable truths in common: Jesus is present in the Eucharist, Mary was conceived without sin and, when “On Eagle’s Wings” plays, we cry.

In the 38 years since its publication, “On Eagle’s Wings” has achieved global popularity, been translated into a variety of languages and become a Christian funeral classic (if not a staple).

But the song’s true staying power is rooted in our shared but individual experience of hearing it in moments of grief. Composer Jan Michael Joncas wrote the song after he and a friend, Doug Hall, returned from a meal to learn that Hall’s father had died of a heart attack.

Father Joncas doesn’t recall if he ever met Hall’s father, but he remembers wanting somehow to console his friend.

“I knew this was a hard, hard experience in anybody’s life, [and I] just wanted to create something that would be both prayerful and then comforting,” Father Jon-

cas told America in a Skype interview.

In the days preceding Hall’s father’s wake, Father Joncas returned to his parents’ house in Minnesota and composed the song on his guitar, sketching out a melody line and accompanying chords. The now-famous hymn debuted at the wake.

Father Joncas kept the song under wraps for some time after that—he was wary of liturgical music publishing fol-

lowing an earlier negative experience. “On Eagle’s Wings” joined a group of compositions he held onto for several years before submitting them to the St. Louis Jesuits’ publisher, North American Liturgy Resources, who then offered Father Joncas an album deal.

“I think they had already tagged ‘On Eagle’s Wings’ as the [song] that was going to have the most legs,” Father Joncas said.

He didn’t pay much attention to the hymn after that, but he became aware that the song was gaining popularity outside Catholic circles when his publisher forwarded him requests from other denominations to reproduce the song.

Then, following the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Cathy Keating, the governor’s wife, requested that “On Eagle’s Wings” be played at a memorial for those killed.

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On Eagles Wings

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Father Joncas recalled thinking, “Wow, this was way beyond even denominational stuff. This is becoming part of the culture.”

Two years later, Michael Crawford, who originated the role of “The Phantom of the Opera” on Broadway, sang “On Eagle’s Wings” on national television, surprising Father Joncas again with how far his song had reached.

But the crowning moment came when Father Joncas tuned into a broadcast of the funeral of one of his heroes: the famed operatic tenor Luciano Pavarotti.

“Suddenly the soprano [stood] up from the parish choir and...[sang] ‘Sulle Braccia dell’Aquila,’—‘On the Arms of the Eagle’.... It was now in Italian,” Father Joncas remembers. He recalls thinking to himself: “They’re singing ‘Eagle’s Wings’ at Pavarotti’s funeral. Wow.”

The whole experience was rather surreal for Father Joncas, who thinks of “On Eagle’s Wings” as a callow effort. He draws a parallel between “On Eagle’s Wings” and Ravel’s “Boléro:” it’s not his best work, but he doesn’t mind it being his most popular composition.

“I think I’ve written deeper and better pieces, but this one, for whatever reason, touched people’s hearts, and I’m not gonna yell about that,” Father Joncas said. He has been overwhelmed by the wide-ranging positive reception of the hymn, especially in unexpected places: The song has become a sort of signature selection at the U.S. Air Force Academy’s Cadet Chapel, as well as in Native American communities where the eagle holds an important place in the spiritualities of several tribes.

“The number of times people have come up and talked about the song touching them at really tough moments—I am pretty much just blown away by the experience that God can still use that [song] 35 years, 40 years after its creation and still have it impact people’s lives,” Father Joncas said. “But I don’t think it’s me. I really think it’s the fact that it’s Scripture, that the melody then allows this incredibly important scriptural text to hit the heart in a way that it wouldn’t, maybe, if you were just reading it.”

Scripture is at the center of Father Joncas’s creative process, even as his musical style ranges widely, from his popular folk-inspired “I Have Loved You” (1977) to a breathtaking “Salve Regina” canon for double choir (2008).

He cites among his musical influences the Gregorian chant and polyphony he heard as an altar server, his classical background—his mother was a lyric soprano and he was trained in 20th-century piano technique—and the folk music revival of his young adult years.

“You know, one of my heroes was Joni Mitchell,” Father Joncas said with a characteristic rosy-cheeked grin. “She was once quoted as saying...[that] it’s really hard being a musician or composer because, like, nobody ever said to Van Gogh, ‘Paint a “Starry Night” again, man!’” Father Joncas laughed, “And I don’t want to write ‘Eagle’s Wings’ again.”

Adapted from an article for America Magazine, americamagazine.org, by Colleen Dulle, a Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., Fellow at America.



Fr. Joncas



As we continue to live with Covid-19, we also need to live with the notion that a good many of our traditions and special events must adapt and, in some cases, must be canceled until next year. Unfortunately, that is true for the St. Vincent dePaul annual Spaghetti Dinner fundraising event. A November tradition for many years, the Spaghetti Dinner did not take place in 2020. SVdP will also cancel the Thanksgiving Food Box collection which over the years has ensured that hundreds of families in our community do not go hungry on Thanksgiving and for a few weeks later.

While the traditional, community-involved events won’t be happening this year, SVdP will still need our help! St. Ambrose Conference President Randy Rempage says the group will be providing gift cards to our needy neighbors to purchase food in place of the boxes. St. Ambrose SVdP will provide hams, as usual.

If you would like to contribute, please purchase gift cards in the amount of \$25 or \$50 to either Kroger or Parkway foods and return to the rectory anytime now, please.

Please remember that the need for assistance is increasing once again to pre-Covid levels (with no federal stimulus checks in the offing). In addition to food gift cards, cash or checks made out to St. Vincent dePaul St. Ambrose Conference are most welcome this season to help fund the group’s ongoing work in our community.

All Things Considered

Archbishop Vigneron's original dispensation issued this past Spring from the obligation to attend Sunday/Saturday mass due to the Covid-19 pandemic was to have expired this weekend. We now know that the dispensation will be extended through Ash Wednesday – the beginning of Lent 2021.

I believe that all of us, the Archbishop included, fully thought that the pandemic would have subsided by this time. But with poor choices on the personal level and mismanagement on the national level, we find ourselves in way worse shape than we were back in March!

Making the wearing of protective masks into a political issue was/is inexplicable. Now what I have come to realize is that mask-wearing has also become a religious issue. Denominations like the Later Day Saints, Jehovah's Witness and a whole lot of Evangelical sects are rallying against mask wearing because "like Adam and Eve caught in sin, it hides your face from God" and other such drivel.

Thankfully this does not seem to be a problem for main-line Christians in general and Catholics in specific. We've long held the position that the Bible is not a science text book. Therefore we should be very wary of drawing our medical advice from its pages. The Bible tells us that there is more than the visible world seen and measured by science. Science is not opposed to faith, nor faith to science. And certainly any so called "Biblical command" to ignore medical science and put one's life at risk is far away from the life-affirming teachings of Scripture.

If you find yourself caught in a theological debate with some of your anti-mask friends or relatives over the holidays, you might find the following from Claire Johnson helpful. She wrote this for the *Baptist Global News*,

in an obvious effort to convince her colleagues that wearing a mask is indeed a religious issue – but not like they think it is.

"Mask-wearing is an exercise in the spiritual practice of love of neighbor. I wear my mask as a sign of my love and care for others, especially those who are most at risk. Jesus tells us that when we care for "the least of these," we are really serving him. I believe that by caring for the most vulnerable among us, I am following Christ's example.

Wearing a mask is increasing my understanding of humility. It is humbling to wear a protective mask, especially in communities where doing so is unpopular and even ridiculed. Some people look at me with questions in their eyes or make comments that imply that I am over-reacting. I remember that no matter how much scorn I bear, the Christ I follow endured more.

Listening comes along with humility. No matter how comfortable the mask is, talking through a mask is difficult. I feel the cloth suck into my mouth when I inhale, and I am aware of the muffled sound of my voice as I attempt to communicate. However, I also find myself speaking less and listening more when my face is covered. I am resolved to listen more consciously and intentionally whenever I'm wearing my mask. Not surprisingly, this practice has also extended into my non-mask wearing time."

Four months into this pandemic, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) came to the studied conclusion that affirms that cloth face coverings are a critical tool in the fight against Covid-19 – that could reduce the spread of the disease, particularly when used universally within communities.

Consider both the religion and

science of these things as your family gathers, or does not gather, for the holidays.

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This Thanksgiving issue of *The Beehive* gives focus to the beehives and the beekeepers of St. Ambrose. George Chapman and Robert Pangborn have tended our hives through the cold days of the past winter – refreshed and renewed our colonies in the spring – kept predators at bay all summer – and are now securing our hives for another winter.

Their quiet dedication to the bees and to this little corner of creation merits our thanks. As Jesus said: *"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with small things; I will put you in charge of greater. Come and share your master's happiness!"*

I took this picture of George and Robert the day they began the honey harvest. I asked if they wanted to remove their masks for the photo, so that people could identify them. Both men declined, with George saying it was important to be identified *with* his mask! Neither them nor I knew I was going to write a column about the importance of "faithful servants" wearing masks.



Thanks to them for their dedication and good example. Thanks also to those who helped cover some of the ex-

penses of rejuvenating our hives back in the frightening days of last Spring. All of this was a vote of confidence in the importance of tending to small things as a way of expressing our faith in the providence of God to keep loving and forgiving us. The 2020 vintage of our Ambrosian honey will carry with it that bitter-sweet truth.

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We're a pro-life Church – pro-life in all its iterations – and one of the most obvious is the extent to which we have embraced the outreach of the local

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All Things Considered, cont

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Pregnancy Aid Society. Our Christmas drive for them is a concrete way for us to support needy moms with some of those costly post delivery expenses.

Given the “iffy” nature of church attendance and shopping over the next few weeks, it makes sense to extend the collection time for Pregnancy Aid this year. I suggest that we should elongate that time through the whole month of December. Although cumbersome when it comes to storage, it’s better for the good of the whole to get this done earlier rather than later.

I also think that we need to acknowledge the reality of on-line shopping. E-commerce accounted for 20 percent of total holiday sales in 2019. During the pandemic, online shopping will certainly increase. If you want to make an online purchase from a vendor, you can have it sent directly to the parish with a marking “Pregnancy Aid” on the label or gift card. If you still enjoy the old-fashioned way of participating in the Pregnancy Aid Society by wrapping and bringing a gift to church, we’ll be collecting those in the ARK – from now through the end of December.

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It occurs to me that I have made it through an entire column without a single mention of the Family of Parishes reorganization program that is scheduled to be rolled out next week. Unfortunately that does not mean that it can be ignored. I honestly don’t know where we are in the process. And I don’t think I am the only priest out there who feels that just may be the way we’re supposed to feel. I judge that based on my interactions with neighboring pastors at Sts. Matthew and Clare.

We’re submitting Step Two: Parish Overview this week. When that is finished, we’ll post it for your reading.

There is a web meeting between the Archbishop and his priests which is scheduled after we go to press with this issue.

Landings are dangerous. Remain seated with your seat belts fastened until we have come to a full stop.

TRP

The Upside of a Lockdown

As shelter-in-place orders march into summer, quarantiners are getting restless, but the Earth is enjoying a much-needed reprieve. One such lucky beneficiary from the curtailing of human activity is the wild honey bee.

The natural world is stretching and awakening. According to NASA, motor vehicle pollution has fallen by one third in the Northeastern United States since restrictions began in mid-March. With this reduction in travel and commuting, it’s not just the air that has cleared up: Wild animals have been enjoying more of our shared terrain to themselves, as elephants walk through streets of India and lions take cat naps along on the side of the roadway in Kruger National Park, in South Africa. But of all the creatures enjoying the biggest “home alone” celebration, the bee has the most to celebrate.

In recent years, the bee population has been threatened, with US honey bees losing 38 percent of their population between Oct. 1, 2018, and April 1, 2019. This disappearance in colonies is known as ‘colony collapse disorder,’ which the USDA Agricultural Research Service defines as “a dead colony with no adult bees and with no dead bee bodies but with a live queen, and usually honey and immature bees, still present.”

The current COVID-19 lockdown is helping to reverse the sharp decline in bee populations in two significant ways. Fewer fumes and pollution particles from automobiles means that bees can more easily smell floral scents that lead them to plants that need pollinating. Another reason that the bee population may be recovering is that, as the BBC noted, “Fewer cars on the roads means other benefits for bees too. The number of bee deaths is likely to fall as car journeys decrease during the lockdown, Brown notes. A 2015 study by Canadian researchers estimated that 24 billion bees and wasps are killed by vehicles on roads across North America every year.”

While we may be getting restless as we stay hunkered down in our homes, it is a positive reinforcement to know that the natural world is getting a reprieve as we forgo our routine activities and contribute to less pollution. The bees are clapping their wings.

Excerpt from: “The World’s Bee Population is Recovering During Covid Lockdown,” by Stephanie McClain, for The Beet May 2020.



Honey from Our Hives

The “2020 vintage” of St. Ambrose honey is now processed and being packaged. While we’ve added new hives, we’ve also left more honey for the bees themselves to winter-over, so there is a *limited* number of jars that we can offer for sale. The price is \$40 per jar, and purchase is restricted to *one per parishioner*. This is a unique gift, one that literally is a “taste of St. Ambrose,” since honey, like wine, takes on the character of the place where it is produced.

Our honey jar comes with Ambrose featured on it, the patron saint of bees and beekeepers. These one-pound jars come gift-boxed and will be on sale starting December 7th through our office. Call (313) 822-2814.

Faith Formation Station

O Holy Spirit, descend plentifully into my heart. Enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling and scatter there Thy cheerful beams.” - Saint Augustine

Confirmation is a defining moment on a lifelong path to discipleship. On Sunday November 21, 2020 twenty-six ninth grade Confirmation candidates participate (either virtually or in person) in the St. Ambrose tradition of the Rite of Inscription. The students will be called before the parish community to receive a Bible and a blessing. These students have completed various service projects from volunteering at the parish Fish Fry and Oysterfest, raking leaves for neighbors and grandparents, coaching younger students, sending cards to the sick and homebound, and making sandwiches for the homeless. They have submitted an extensive preparation packet outlining their commitment to receiving the sacrament including a sponsor and saint biography, service reflection, interview question responses, and a Holy Spirit prayer. They have studied and discussed the Ascension Press Chosen Confirmation program for the last two years with their catechists John Clark and Brendan O’Byrne. In the weeks ahead they continue to participate in individual interviews with Fr. Tim and continue to pray and discern. On January 9, 2020 the students will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in a separate 1:30 p.m. liturgy with Bishop Donald Hanchon as the confirming prelate. Please continue to keep these candidates, their sponsors, catechists, and families in your prayers.

Earlier in the year our Confirmation candidates were asked to compare the spirit of God to different objects. I share with you some of their creative responses:

The Spirit of God is like...

- LEGO because God helps us put life together like Lego pieces. – Jack R.
- A KEY because God helps you unlock many challenges – Andres L.
- A FLASHLIGHT because he guides our way in life \ and is light in a dark room – Paul K.
- A SHIELD because it protects us and helps us against harm/danger, will always be there for us, and is strong and resilient. Like a family shield and crest it represent the qualities of our family. – Liam R.
- A BLANKET because it warms and comforts. – Alayna O.
- The AIR because it’s always there, it’s everywhere and feed us perpetually without our even noticing. – Mr. Clark
- A SPOON because it bring nourishment to your body as religion brings nourishment to your soul. – Louis C.
- A SEASHELL because it can travel the world, see everything and feel the world and still be strong and unbroken. It can also look different to everyone but still be true at the base the same. – Dailey J.
- A MAGNIFYING GLASS because it helps you magnify your love for God. – Maddie T.
- A STICKY NOTE because we all need a helpful reminder – it sticks. – Izzy K.
- A GLUE STICK because you want to have a sticky bond with God. – Mason C.
- GLUE because He always sticks with you. – Jackson R.
- A STRING because it can wrap around us like a hug. – Nick B.
- Unimaginable KINDNESS because He is forgiving and merciful. – Ella J.
- The SUN because He shines bright. – Lina B.
- A warm BLANKET because it protects you and is comforting. – Lauren C.
- A TREE because He’s a part of all of us like trees are a part of our world. – Sara J.
- A gentle summer BREEZE because it warms, comforts, and nourishes. – Malvina L.
- MUSIC because it flows through us, makes us happy, and inspires us to help others. – Vincent M.

Kelly Woolums

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc
Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski
Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums
Minister of Music: Dr. Norah Duncan IV
Office Manager: Peggy O’Connor
Secretary: Mary Urbanski

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord’s Day – Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m. Sunday - 10:00 a.m.
Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.
Penance: As announced and by appointment.
Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.
Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased’s passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230
Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838
Email address: stambrose@comcast.net
Religious Education: (313) 332-5633
Pastoral Ministry: (313) 332-5631
Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814
Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

2	0	CSA
2	0	Box Scores

Number of Families	800
Returns to date	99
Average Gift ('19)	\$463
Quota for the Archdiocese	\$70,663
Property/Liability Insurance ...	\$52,000
Parish '20 Target.....	\$122,663
Received as of 11/11 /20.....	\$75,977

- Due to the pandemic, the Catholic Services Appeal was delayed from the spring until now. There has been a 15% reduction in our target reflecting a 15% reduction in the AoD budget.
- We are responsible for a minimum of \$70,663. After that all overages will be applied to our insurances. CSA gifts are exempt from the regular Archdiocesan taxation.

Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

November 23

St. Clement I, pope & martyr,

St. Columban, abbot &

Blessed Miguel Augustin Pro, priest & martyr

November 24

St. Andrew Dung-Lac Martyr & Companions

November 25

St. Catherine of Alexandria, virgin & martyr

November 26

Weekday - 3rd Week in Ord. Time

Thanksgiving Day - office closed

November 27

Weekday - 3rd week in Ord. Time

Office closed

November 28

4:00 p.m. Mass - 1st Sunday of Advent

November 29

10:00 a.m. Mass - 1st Sunday of Advent

•Web broadcast of weekend Mass from St. Ambrose will begin at 8:00 on Sunday, and will be accessible throughout the day.

52 Sundays

“52 Sundays” offers simple and insightful ways for your family to spend time together each Sunday learning more about the Catholic faith and having fun while you’re at it. Materials are available for download online or you may sign up to receive the weekly email at www.52sundays.com/

Scriptures for the 34th Week in Ordinary Time

November 23

Rv 14: 1-3, 4b-5

Ps 24: 1b-4b, 5-6

Lk 21: 1-4

November 24

Rv 14: 14-19

Ps 96: 10-13

Lk 21: 5-11

November 25

Rv 15: 1-4

Ps 98: 1-3b, 7-9

Lk 21: 12-19

November 26

Rv 18: 1-2, 21-23; 19: 1-3, 9a

Ps 100: 1b-5

Lk 21: 20-28

November 27

Rv 20: 1-4, 11-21: 2

Ps 84: 3-6a, 8a

Lk 21: 29-33

November 28

Rv 22: 1-7

Ps 95: 1-7b

Lk 21: 34-36

November 29

Is 63: 16b-17, 19b; 64: 2-7

Ps 80: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19

1 Cor 1: 1: 3-9

Mk 4: 18-22

First Sunday of Advent

For the foreseeable future, there will be two Masses on here on the weekend
– Saturday at 4:00 p.m. and Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Out of an abundance of caution, we have opened mass to a congregation of
25% of the building’s capacity – roughly 150 persons.

Face masks and social distancing is required. In addition, we will now be
requiring tracing information similar to the one done at your doctor’s office.

Our church building is sanitized prior to each liturgy.

View Sunday’s mass at facebook.com/stambroseparish or [stambroselive on youtube.stambrosechurch.net](https://stambroselive.onyoutube.com/stambrosechurch.net) starting at 10:00 a.m.

Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

On Sunday, November 15, 2020

in envelopes we received \$4,564.00

in the loose collection\$1,711.00

in electronic donations \$2,706.00

for a total of\$8,981.00

Under budget for the week.....\$1,119.00

Number of envelopes mailed 782

Number of envelopes used39



Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Darby O’Toole, Anna Noto Billings, Eileen O’Brien, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Jerry Hansen, Jackie Walkowski, Kristen Kingzett, Maria Simcina, Albina Checki, Brian Tague, Sharif Hannan, Shirley Whelan, Anne Purvis, Chris Walsh, Jerry Gutowski, Kevin O’Connor, and those suffering and hospitalized worldwide with COVID-19.

Christian Financial

St. Ambrose Parish, through Christian Financial Credit Union, is equipped to make electronic transfers from your checking account or credit card on our website. Your checking account or credit card may be used to make a single donation; or you may set up automatic weekly, monthly or quarterly contributions on a schedule. Go to stambrosechurch.net for information on electronic giving.

When Your Donation Is Worth 7% More

As we come upon the last days of the liturgical year, it means we are also coming up to the end of a fiscal tax period. **If you intend to make an end-of-the-year gift to the parish, you’ll need to date it before January 1st and get it into our office in an envelope marked “Christmas Collection.” Gifts made in this manner are free from the usual Archdiocesan taxation of 7%.**

When it comes to calculating your charitable deductions for the Internal Revenue Service this coming April, the cutoff date for 2020 deductions is December 31st. So, it’s now time to review your tax strategy.

A significant portion of our parish operating revenue comes from end-of-the-year contributions which can be in the form of cash, securities, stock, real estate and other negotiables. Consult your tax preparer who can guide you as to the best way of making a donation to St. Ambrose.

Honey Harvest 2020!

