

St. Ambrose Parish

JANUARY 8, 2022
BEEHIVE



The Crib and the Cross

*Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom.
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.*

Most of us have seen Christmas pageants where children dress as the magi wearing crowns and carrying gifts, while those watching sing the carol, “We Three Kings.” The first verse, which describes the various terrain and obstacles

they had to navigate as they followed a star to reach the infant Jesus, is so familiar that most of us can recite it from memory.

In the next verses, each of the magi tells about his particular gift and its meaning. The fourth verse, sung by the king traditionally named Balthazar (often depicted with Black skin), strikes a discordant and even disturbing note:

As some of my friends would say, “Talk about a buzz-kill!” This is not the typical sentiment one would expect at a birthday celebration. One can only wonder what Mary and Joseph would have thought if they heard a strange visitor from a

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The Crib and the Cross

Continued from page 1

faraway land give so bleak a prediction for their child's life. No wonder this verse is often omitted at most Christmas pageants and celebrations. It seems so out of step with the joyful character of the season.

Yet, there is profound theological wisdom in this verse. In ancient times, myrrh was an ointment used as an analgesic or painkiller. Sometimes it was burned in the rooms of sick people to aid in their healing. The gospels relate that Jesus was given a mixture of wine and myrrh as a medicine while he was dying on the cross. Middle Eastern cultures also used myrrh in embalming their dead. Thus the gospels speak of how the female disciples used this oil on Jesus upon his death. Some scholars believe that myrrh was given to Jesus by the magi because its bitter taste represented the difficulties, suffering, and trials he would face in his life. It also, as the song states, foreshadowed his death.

This verse, then, resonates with the consensus of scripture scholars who state that the passion narratives, that is, the accounts of Jesus' suffering and death, are the oldest parts of the gospels. The accounts of Jesus' birth were written later and written in light of the cross. The shadow of the cross looms over the crib, symbolized by a funeral ointment being gifted to a newborn child.

Although this verse of a familiar Christmas carol may make us uncomfortable, it underscores an important faith conviction. The incarnation was not an illusion. Jesus did not pretend to be mortal and vulnerable. God became truly human. Jesus shares fully and completely in our human condition, including its tragedies, betrayals, and injustices. "Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying" — these are not all that it means to be human. But for many, if not most of us, these are inescapable realities that we must endure.

Just as the cross looms over the crib, so does the light of resurrection shine upon it. The resurrection is God's assurance that tragedy and death are not the final realities of the human condition. These are not God's will. In raising Jesus from the dead, God shows that human beings are summoned to work to struggle against the horrors and afflictions that trouble so many. God vindicates the healing and saving ministry of Jesus and shows us that his way of being human is the pattern for our lives as well.

I think of this as I contemplate the almost 20,000 migrants who now live in New York City, my home, having been bused (more accurately, dumped) here by governors in Texas and Florida. My heart aches as I witness fellow human beings in dire need being treated as pawns in a political chess game. Many are children who have already seen more affliction or suffering than anyone should see in a lifetime. The shadow of the cross is real for them.

This omitted verse of a Christmas carol reminds me that the feast is not a time for glossing over the tragedy of life. Joy is not the same as fantasy. Rather, the grace of Christmas lies in its power to open our eyes to the needs and injustices that afflict the most vulnerable. And then to offer our myrrh, our balm, as we attend to their needs and work for a world where all are treated as the precious children of God that they are.

The grace of Christmas is that the cross looms over the crib, just as resurrection's light shines upon it. The birth, passion, and resurrection of Jesus show us what it means to be authentically human. That's an insight worth celebrating in song. This Christmas, remember that the cross looms over the crib.

By Fr. Bryan Massingale, for the US Catholic magazine, Nov. 28, 2022



The Dominican Literacy Center at 5555 Connor Avenue in Detroit strives to provide tutoring services in a conducive learning environment which will help adults improve their reading, speaking, listening, writing, mathematics, and basic computer skills.

The Dominican Literacy Center is once again fully open and functioning following the pandemic.

We encourage all students and tutors to come back to the building as there is nothing like in-person instruction! There is a special need for more tutors. For more information please visit the DLC at dlcliteracy.org

Funeral of Pope Benedict

For a rebroadcast of the liturgy from last Thursday, go to the Vatican Media YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNHE3mjiIFw>) or/and the Vatican News Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/vaticannews/>).

Gabriel Richard in Art

The Fr. Gabriel Richard Guild at the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit is very excited to announce its first art contest for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Students are invited to submit artistic renderings of Fr. Richard depicting his image, an event from his life, or a general aspect of his life.

The winning students in each age group will each receive a \$1,000 cash prize. The winning students' schools will also receive a \$1,000 cash prize. Prizes are courtesy of contest sponsor Concorde Financial. Artwork will be displayed at the Annual Exhibit on Fr. Gabriel Richard at the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit in September.

All Things Considered

We'll be getting off to a bit of a wobbly New Year as we endeavor to move forward on completing the ARK repairs. Electrical matters still slow us down. Enlarging the stove vent in the kitchen area has produced a reassessment by the local building inspectors. That in turn is slowing down the installation of the new equipment. The elevator company must have taken off for the holidays, since nobody was answering their phone.

More instability comes from the unexpected medical leave of our music minister, Louise Veltri. She has bailed us out of so many tough situations in past years that it's rough not to be able to turn to her again for help.

Our search for a replacement will be difficult since most music ministers are contracted through the end of the fiscal year. To be honest, you'll never know who might be at the keyboard when you come to mass these days. In some circumstances, there might not be any music minister. Our priority is to cover major events, like Confirmation and weddings and funerals.

It's going to be a bumpy ride in the music department for the foreseeable future.

I told the pew refinishers not to worry about getting our furniture back to us before Christmas because we never were going to get a full house at any Mass this holiday. That was based on past attendance numbers which had dropped precipitously during the pandemic.

This was one time I was happy to be proven wrong in my assessment. This year's Children's Christmas Mass numbers were back to what they used to be pre-COVID. It was a full house, with standing room only. More importantly, the mood of the assembly was "merry and bright."

A point of comparison here is how things came together or didn't in 2022 vs 2021. This year's numbers are

- *Eve 4:00 ... 602 persons*
- *Midnight ... 160 persons*
- *8:30 Day ... 60 persons*
- *11:15 Day ... 120 persons*

Last Christmas in 2001, the congregant numbers were:

- *Eve 4:00 ... 379 persons*
- *Midnight ... 120 persons*
- *8:30 Day ... 85 persons*
- *11:15 Day ... 80 persons*

With the exception of the early Mass on Christmas morning, this represents movement in the right direction. We were one of the few parishes who retained two Christmas Day masses. I thought that because of that, we would host a decent number of worshippers that early morning. But that did not happen. In fact, it never seems to happen. If it didn't work this year when Christmas fell on a Sunday, it's not going to get better in years when it falls on a weekday. Most parishes have gone to a single mid-morning mass on Christmas morning. So we should do the same, or provide a "latest morning mass" alternative in coming years for those who need more time to scrape things together on Christmas morning. That would mean going later in our scheduling on Christmas Day. Since there is an abundance of 10:00 Masses in the area, we perhaps should consider dropping the 8:30 a.m. Mass and only retaining the 11:15 a.m. service as we schedule in the future.

Something that we never used to track, but maybe we should have been are the electronic participants in worship.

Some 75 persons participated in the live-stream of the 4:00 Mass. Sixty-nine persons logged on to view Midnight mass in real time. That indicates that there is a substantial number of people who want to somehow stay connected to their parish in worship, even if they can't be there in person. And remember, we have no way of knowing if those logging on to us for Mass are single viewers or a family of viewers.

Here's another number which merits our attention: our Facebook reach was 657 for the 4:00 Children's Liturgy and 299 for the Midnight Mass.

I have to believe that those who join us electronically for prayer understand that it is not a perfect substitute for being there in person; yet for them it may just be the next best experience. And honestly, I am edified by the number of people who took time to log on to their computers and join us in prayer.

TRP



On January 7, 2023,
Bishop Donald Hanchon
completed the Sacraments of
Initiation for these young women

and men of St. Ambrose. The gift and grace of
the Holy Spirit was given in Confirmation to...

- **Maxwell Christensen • Noah Cierpial • Neva Combs**
- **Anthony Kaminski • Julian Lancaster**
- **Dante Mele • Salvatore Profeta • Connor Smith**
- **Elizabeth Vassel • Natalie Vassel**
- **Aidan Wass • Avery Welsh • Celesta Weidenbach**



Name

Home Phone

Work Phone

Email Address

- ☐ I would simply like to learn more about the Catholic Faith.
- ☐ I desire to prepare for my Baptism into Christianity.
- ☐ I've been Baptized as a Christian and now desire to join in Catholic Communion.
- ☐ I'm non-Catholic, but married to a Catholic, and now wish to join the Catholic Church.
- ☐ I'm Catholic and I would like to complete my initiation into the Catholic Church by celebrating Confirmation and/or Communion.
- ☐ I'm Baptized Catholic and would like to learn more about my faith and how to practice it.
- ☐ I want to propose someone for Catholic Church membership and offer to serve as their sponsor.
- ☐ I would be willing to help with an R.C.I.A. program.
- ☐ I have other needs, requests, and questions. Please contact me.

Return this to the Parish Rectory or place it in the Collection basket.

Faith Formation Station

"I therefore invite you to reflect on what I am writing to you. Nowadays it is particularly necessary to rediscover the sacrament of Confirmation and its important place in our spiritual growth. Those who have received the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation should remember that they have become "temples of the Spirit:" God lives within them. Always be aware of this and strive to allow the treasure within you to bring forth fruits of holiness. Confirmation gives us special strength to witness to and glorify God with our whole lives. It makes us intimately aware of our belonging to the Church, the "Body of Christ," of which we are all living members, in solidarity with one another. By allowing themselves to be guided by the Spirit, each baptized person can bring his or her own contribution to the building up of the Church because of the charisms given by the Spirit, for "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7).

Pope Benedict XIV

Our amazing group of *confirmandi* were sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit this weekend at a special 1:30 p.m. liturgy on Saturday. It is my honor to share with you their heart-felt prayers to the Holy Spirit. Please keep these young people in your prayers as they continue their faith journey as confirmed members of our Church.

COME HOLY SPIRIT, fill me with your joy and peace. Help me to become wise and make good decisions when I struggle. Shower me with your counsel to fend off negativity and the strength to do what is right. Give me the glasses to see into others' hearts and help them. I am thankful for your eternal love and guiding me to the path of the Catholic community. I praise you. Amen.
– Maxwell Christensen

THANK YOU, GOD, for bringing me here today. Thank you for the gifts you have given me in my life. I pray for myself, for my family, and for the whole human family. I pray for peace on Earth and for your grace to touch the hearts of all people. I pray that people show empathy and compassion and love toward each other. I pray for less anger, hostility, and violence in the world today. Amen.
– Noah Cierpial

COME HOLY SPIRIT, help those who are broken. Heal those who are wounded. Let us come together as one to celebrate life as we live it. And if we shall part, let us remember each other with love and continue to be guided by the Holy Trinity. Amen.
– Neva Combs

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, bless me Lord with the fruits of your wisdom. Guide me through the path of righteousness. I pray for safety for my family and friends. Lord, help me with my faith and my forgiveness towards others. Forgive my sins and my temptations that drift me away from you. Jesus, strengthen the Holy Spirit in my heart. Amen.
– Anthony Kaminski

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, in your infinite wisdom. Forgive my sins and guide me through life. Help me use all the gifts you have blessed me with. Remind me that only you are perfect, and help me be more forgiving of my mistakes. Amen.
– Julian Lancaster

DEAR GOD, thank you for everything you've given me, my family, and friends. I pray that you guide not only me but everyone around me through

anything and everything. Help me and them make the right choices and stay with them. Please help me be a better brother, son, and friend to set a good example for people around me. Keep them out of harm's way.
– Dante Mele

DEAR GOD, may you bless me and give me strength to persevere through any hardships that come my way. And I ask that you protect me and my family from sin. I am grateful for your forgiveness of my sins. I ask you to protect others in difficult situations, like those in Ukraine. I ask that you help them meet their needs to live. Amen.
– Salvatore Profeta

COME HOLY SPIRIT, guide me to have a better day than today. Loving and admirable God, guide me to have a better week than the one before. Give my family a better day than the one before them. Thank you, loving and admirable God. Amen.
– Connor Smith

DEAR GOD, help me to stay true to myself. Help me to help others in need. Help me to be there for my loved ones through their hard times. And please always help me to be the best person I can be. I want to thank you for always being there for me. Amen.
– Elizabeth Vassel

DEAR GOD, help me to go through the Confirmation process. Help me by being by my side and giving me courage. Please forgive me of all of my sins as I go into Confirmation. Please bless me and my sister as we go through this process together. Thank you for everything you have given me and my family. Amen.
– Natalie Vassel

COME HOLY SPIRIT, bless my parents, my friends, my aunt and uncle. Bless them with humbleness and remove their ignorance because no one is perfect. Give us closure so our life is simpler because simple things are the best in life. Amen.
– Aidan Wass.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, please accept me and love me for who I am. Thank you for everything that you've given to me and for listening to me when I call on you. Thank you for giving me food, shelter, and love. Amen. – Celesta Weidenbach

DEAR GOD, thank you for everything you have given me: my family, friends, brother, and, of course, dog. I pray that you guide me through anything I do, always helping me make the right choice, and always staying true to you. Please help me to not be so hard on myself, and to slow down and have fun with what I do. This will allow me to be a better sister as it will set a good example for my brother. Finally, I pray that you watch over my family and keep them safe. Amen.
– Avery Welsh

REMINDERS:

- **Religious Education Calendar:** Please note that we DO have class over the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday this year. We do our best to schedule faith formation classes around the GPPSS calendar; however, we also aim to get our required number of classes in by early May. Additional program calendars can be found in the Merit building hallway. Please check your inbox every Friday afternoon for our Friday Family Flocknote updates.

Ghirelli Rosaries

Six different custom designed rosaries were made by hand in Italy expressly for St. Ambrose Parish. The bead collection ranges from hard woods to various semi-precious stones.

The crucifix is modeled from the Ark Plaza sculpture and the center piece depicts the First and Second Coming of Christ from our sanctuary. The "Pater" bead is taken from a details in our stained glass windows. Not just a beautiful work of craftsmanship, but a useful aid in prayer, a real legacy piece. To order, please visit our website, use the QR code below, or visit the parish office.



The Beehive

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

Priest in Solidum: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc
Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski
Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums
Minister of Music: Louise Veltri
Office Manager: Peggy O'Connor
Secretary: Mary Urbanski

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 & 11:15 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

Liturgy Schedule

Monday, January 9

The Baptism of the Lord

Tuesday, January 10

Weekday 1st Week of Ordinary Time

8:30 a.m. – Mass – Pope Benedict XVI

Wednesday, January 11

Weekday 1st week in Ordinary Time

Thursday, January 12

Weekday 1st week in Ordinary Time

7:00 p.m. – Mass Dorothy Amberg,
Noella Blancke

Friday, January 13

St. Hilary, bishop & doctor

12:00 – Funeral – James Lamoureux

Saturday, January 14

4:00 p.m. – Mass – For All People

Sunday, January 15

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30 – Mass – For All People

11:15 – Mass – For All People



Scriptures for the 1st Week of Ordinary Time

January 9

Is 42: 1-4, 6-7 or

Acts 10: 34-38

Ps 29: 1-2, 3-4, 9-10

Mt 3: 13-17

January 10

Heb 2: 5-12

Ps 8: 2ab, 5-9

Mk 1: 21-29

January 11

Heb 2: 14-18

Ps 105: 1-4, 6-9

Mk 1: 29-39

January 12

Heb 3: 7-14

Ps 95: 6=7c, 8-11

Mk 1: 40-45

January 13

Heb 4: 1-5, 11

Ps 78: 3, 4bc, 6c-8

Mk 2: 1-12

January 14

Heb 4: 12-16

Ps 19: 8-10, 15

Mk 2: 13-17

January 15

Is 49: 3, 5-6

Ps 40: 2, 4, 7-10

1 Coe 1: 1-3

Jn 1: 29-34

The Epiphany of the Lord

January 7th - 8th

Reference # in our Breaking Bread Hymnal or on your iPhone using the QR code.

Entrance: Angels From the Realms of Glory #109

Psalm 96: Today Is Born Our Savior #73

Preparatory: The First Nowell #110

Communion: We Three Kings #105

Recessional: Songs Of Thankfulness And Praise #108



Currently Wayne County shows a **MEDIUM** level of Covid risk. As a result, St. Ambrose Parish is still strongly recommending the wearing of masks in church.

To participate electronically, go to: facebook.com/stambroseparish or better yet, to You Tube at www.youtube.com/channel/UCbymBGiQxUF6UqPct5xFg

Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

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

On Sunday, January 1, 2023

in envelopes we received \$4,255.00

in the loose collection..... \$2,291.00

in electronic donations..... \$4,567.46

for a total of \$11,113.46

Over budget for the week..... \$1,013.46

Number of envelopes mailed 621

Number of envelopes used 62



Join us on Facebook
facebook.com/stambroseparish

Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Matthew Elias, Mary Martin, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Anna Noto Billings, Eileen O'Brien, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Jackie Walkowski, Maria Simcina, Brian Tague, Sharif Hannan, Shirley Whelan, Anne Purvis, Jeanene Maples, Kevin O'Connor, Albina Checki, Judy Sivanov, Matthew Brown, Lily Faith, Patty Freund, Karen Jordan, Janis Ramsey, Colette Gilewicz, Al LaHood, Valerie Hudson, Norma Chinchilla and those suffering and hospitalized worldwide with Covid.

Our Dead

A funeral Mass for long-time parishioner **Vincent F. LoCicero** (80) was offered here on January 3rd.

Vince was born to Rose Louise Flores and Thomas Vincent LoCicero in June of 1942 in Grosse Pointe Farms. He has one sibling, Thomas Vincent LoCicero Jr.

From his parents, Vince inherited a love of sailing. He would spend 50 years in the National Power Squadron, becoming their youngest Commander in 1980.

After Vincent's graduation from Austin High School he attended Michigan State University College of Law. After receiving his J.D., he practiced in his father's firm which had offices in Downtown Detroit.

While in college, he courted Roberta (Bobbie) Bradford, a student at St. Ambrose High. They were married here in 1966. This is where they settled and raised two daughters: Christina (David) Lo Cicero Brutton and Lisa Ann LoCicero (Michael Jann).

Vince and Bobbie were quite active in Ambrosian parish life. For years, while their children grew, they made the transition from back to front pews at mass. Vince served as Parish Council President. He also spent eight years on the Grosse Pointe School Board – two as their president. Until illness finally prevented it, Vince continued as a frequent participant at our Sunday morning liturgies.



Benedict XVI: “Stand Firm in the Faith”

“The pontificate of Benedict XVI [was] and will also commonly be remembered as a pontificate marked by times of crisis and difficulty. This is true, and it would be unfair to gloss over this aspect. But it should be seen and evaluated not superficially. As for internal or external criticism and opposition, he himself recalled with a smile that several other Popes had faced far more dramatic times and situations. Without the need to go back to the persecutions of the early centuries, one can think of Pius IX, or Benedict XV when he condemned the “useless slaughter,” or the contexts in which Popes operated during the world wars. So he did not consider himself a martyr. No Pope can imagine not encountering criticism, difficulties and tensions. This does not detract from the fact that, if necessary, he knew how to react to criticism with vivacity and decisiveness.

However, what has been the heaviest cross of his pontificate, the gravity of which he had already begun to grasp during his time at the Doctrine of the Faith and which continues to manifest itself as a test and a challenge to the Church of historic magnitude, is the affair of sexual abuse. This was also a reason for criticism and personal attacks on him until his last years, thus also a reason for deep suffering.

Having also been very much involved in these matters during his pontificate, I am firmly convinced that he saw in an increasingly lucid way the seriousness of the problems and had great merits in addressing them with breadth and depth of vision in their different dimensions: listening to the victims, rigor in pursuing justice in the face of the crimes, healing the wounds, establishing appropriate norms and procedures, formation and prevention of evil. It was only the beginning of a long journey, but in the right directions and with much humility.

Benedict never worried about an “image” of himself or the Church that did not correspond to the truth. Even in this field he has always moved in the perspective of a man of faith. Beyond pastoral or juridical measures, necessary to confront evil in its manifestations, he felt the terrible and mysterious power of evil and the need to appeal to grace in order not to be crushed by it in despair, but to find the path of healing, conversion, penance, purification, which people, the Church and society need.

When I was asked to summarize, with an episode, the story of Benedict XVI’s pontificate, I recalled the Prayer Vigil during World Youth Day in Madrid, in 2011, on the large esplanade of the Cuatro Vientos Airport, attended by about a million young people. It was in the evening, the darkness growing thicker as the Pope began his speech. At one point, a veritable hurricane of rain and wind blew in. The lighting and sound systems stopped working and many of the tents on the edge of the esplanade collapsed. The situation was truly dramatic. The Pope was urged by his staff to move away and take shelter, but he would not. He patiently and courageously remained seated in his place on the open stage, protected by a simple umbrella flapping in the wind. The whole immense assembly followed his example, with confidence and patience. After some time, the storm quieted down, the rain stopped, and a great and wholly unexpected calm took over. The facilities resumed operation.

The Pope finished his speech and the wonderful monstrance from Toledo Cathedral was brought to the center of the stage for Eucharistic adoration. The Pope knelt in silence before the Blessed Sacrament and behind him, in the darkness, the immense assembly joined in prayer at length in absolute calm.

In a sense, this may remain the image not only of the pontificate but also of Joseph Ratzinger’s life and the goal of his journey. As he now enters the ultimate silence before the Lord, we too continue to feel ourselves behind him and with him.

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