

Family life is rooted in the unconditional love of God as witnessed by the Holy Family.

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 28

4:00 PM Flora Robinson, requested by daughter, Lisa

Sunday, December 29

8:30 AM Deceased Members of the Affenito Family
10:00 AM Jeanne Burns, 8th Anniversary, requested by Her Family
11:30 AM Silveria Bedoya, requested by Her Family

Monday, December 30

8:30 AM DeAnna Porter, 2nd Anniversary, requested by The Tobias Family
John Garczynski, + Birthday Remembrance, requested by His Daughter, Nancy and Family

Tuesday, December 31

8:30 AM Albert Nardacci, 2nd Anniversary, requested by His Wife & Sons

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

8:30 AM For the People

Thursday, January 2, 2020

8:30 AM Msgr. Shea & Dennis Allen

Friday, January 3, 2020

8:30 AM Bud Swayger, + Birthday Remembrance

Saturday, January 4, 2020

4:00 PM Anne Bennett, 7th Anniversary, requested by Richard & Lucy Discenza

Sunday, January 5, 2020

8:30 AM Maria Ciccone, requested by Filomena Mattia
10:00 AM Armand & Verna Connor, requested by Their Family
11:30 AM Mildred Wells, requested by Maria, Nick & Jake

The 5 p.m. Sunday Masses follows the CCD schedule.
The next Masses are Sunday, January 12 and 26, 2020.

LET US PRAY

Please remember in your prayers, all the sick in our parish, our families and friends. Please also pray for our beloved deceased: Daniel Kennedy, Sr., Clifford Edgerton, Eileen Olszewski, Eleanora Sico, Leo Monaghan and Roger Graham.

NEXT WEEK'S LITURGICAL MINISTERS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 2020

4 PM

Altar Servers: Stella McCarthy, Maggie McCarthy
Reader: Peter Miller

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020

8:30 AM

Altar Servers: Seamus Smith, Anthony Suhocki
Reader: Michele Suhocki

10 AM

Altar Servers: Tucker Costello, Joshua Sturmer
Reader: Ben Howes

11:30 AM

Altar Servers: Kristal Torres, Destenie Pacheco
Reader: Ángel Cruz, Mariana Mujica

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE in the upstairs Church will burn from 12/28/19 to 1/10/20 in Memory of Robert Lancto, 50th Anniversary.

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE in the downstairs Church will burn from 12/28/19 to 1/10/20 in Memory of Mary Krutka, requested by Kathy Wesley.



If you would like to contribute towards the beautiful altar flowers, there is a notebook in the main entrance of the Church. It is easy to fill out a request and a great way to honor someone who has passed away or celebrate a great event in someone's life.

If school is cancelled there will not be an 8:30 AM Mass.

WE STEWARD OUR TREASURE

DECEMBER 14 & 15

400 Envelopes

Total in Envelopes: \$11,663.00

Loose Cash: \$691.00

TOTAL: \$12,354.00

Fuel: \$153.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

ALL 2019 ENVELOPES MUST BE TURNED IN BY JANUARY 5, 2020 FOR 2019 TAX PURPOSES.

CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

REFLECTION BY REV. LEONARD N. PETERSON

Last October I was honored by an invitation to preach at a suburban Philadelphia parish for its annual Forty Hours Devotion. I was warmly received by the pastor and his staff. I soon learned from the parish secretary that she and others on the staff had all attended the parish school together. That coincidence added to their camaraderie at the lunch table. That same secretary had opined that for them “this town is the center of the universe.”

That description of a certain beloved place could easily have applied at a unique time to a tiny, dusty village called Nazareth. It was God’s choice for at least 30 years as “the center of the universe.” We know why. But that very idea would have been laughable to Our Lord’s contemporaries. For all its subsequent fame and ultimate glory, little Nazareth is not even mentioned in the whole Old Testament. As for that prophecy we read today, scholars tell us that St. Matthew was using a little creative imagination based on texts that only hinted at the town’s name.

On this Holy Family Sunday, dare I take that heartfelt description of a town and apply it to our families? They are, or should be, the center of our little universes, should they not? I know that’s a risky thing to say, seeing how so many families struggle these days. Just staying in touch is sometimes difficult. Staying together often develops into a challenge. Using our cell phones, tablets and computers helps. Social media may ease the strain.

But none of those can overcome the devastating effects of divorce. Skipping over other possible obstacles, there is also that anger and resentment that arises sometimes once the will of a parent or other relative is presented by the family lawyer. The Reconciliation Room walls in many a Catholic church could tell you more.

Yet all those obstacles are not insuperable. This is especially so when we meet them with good will and open minds, topped off by the attitude Jesus taught by word and example about our dealings with other residents of our planet. Add to that St. Paul’s “recipe” for right relations in this weekend’s

Second Reading.

We know that even the Holy Family had its difficulties. There were those inconvenient travel orders given to St. Joseph which he met with his exemplary obedience. The burden was shared by a pregnant Blessed Mother. Later, both parents were faced with the fright and temporary helplessness of a lost child. Then came that boy Child’s upsetting question: “Did you not know that I had to be about My Father’s business?” To these we add the presumed early death of St. Joseph. Then there were the seven sorrows foretold by Simeon of Mary, leading to her place at the foot of the Cross. One substantial help for all our families amid the present social upheaval in our Western culture is that attributed to the late Father Patrick Peyton: “The family that prays together stays together.” It’s not an outdated slogan. I even spotted that recently on a roadside billboard. I believe it’s worth a try. To which I add that that’s the real beauty of a family at Mass. I admire the parents of babies and toddlers, who bring them to church nicely dressed and ready for prayer, despite the work that must entail.

While we all work to heal our center, there’s always humor to soften the edges of the effort. Here is a sampling of family-based humor from three past comedians. From the late Bob Hope: “I grew up with six brothers. That’s how I learned to dance—waiting for the bathroom!” Buddy Hackett: “As a child, my family’s menu consisted of two choices: take it or leave it.” And finally Sam Levenson: “The reason grandparents and grandchildren get along so well is that they have a common enemy.”



Please plan to come to the 4 p.m. bi-lingual Mass on Saturday, January 4, 2020, followed by a Three Kings celebration in the high school. There will be food for everyone and gifts for children up to age 12.

If you have moved or changed your phone number, please call the rectory at 562-5477. God may be omniscient, but we could use a heads up to stay connected!

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD is a Holy Day.

There will not be a vigil Mass on Tuesday, December 31 at 6:15 p.m. **There will only be an 8:30 AM Mass on Wednesday, January 1, 2020 in the Upstairs Church** and there will not be a 6:15 p.m. Mass that night.

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARY'S

Monday, December 30

NO SCHOOL, NO CCD

Tuesday, December 31

6:30 am Men of St. Joseph - Lower Church

Wednesday, January 1, 2020 - SOLEMNITY OF MARY

8:30 am Holy Day Mass - Upper Church

Thursday, January 2, 2020

SCHOOL REOPENS

6:45 pm Women's Prayer Group - Lower Church

7 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal - Upper Church

7 pm Encuentro Juvenil - Center

7 pm Ultrella - Center

Sunday, January 5, 2020

10 am Little Church - Lower Church

11 am First Grade CCD - ES

PRAYING TOGETHER is one of our greatest privileges at St. Mary's High School. Each school morning we gather in prayer. We would be honored to pray for you! Please email your prayer request to kjaszek@stmsaints.org or call the school at 568-5692.

Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary prayer line: for prayers call or text Betty, 563-0592, or Marguerite, 531-5648.

Sharon Olson will **REPAIR YOUR ROSARIES** for **FREE**. You may drop them off at the rectory for her and we will call you when they are repaired.

EVENING BIBLE STUDY Beginning on January 8, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. we will begin an 11 week study titled "Letters from Prison." Incarcerated numerous times "for the defense of the gospel" (Phil 1:16), Paul wrote several letters from the confines of prison. *Letters from Prison, Part One* explores the letters of Philippians and Philemon in four sessions, explaining the reason each letter was written and addressing various themes such as joy, unity in Christ, reconciliation, and the close relationship between Paul and his communities. The program provides an in-depth investigation of Paul's letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, two letters with a great deal in common. Besides being written from prison, both letters address Gentile communities learning to live faithful Christian lives. Exploring themes such as God's eternal plan, the unity of the church, and the fullness of life in Christ, these letters offer a sweeping and still relevant vision of faith in Christ and the church as his body.

Everyone, no matter the level of Biblical knowledge, is welcome to join us for this study, which is free. The book is \$20.00. Please do not let the cost discourage anyone from joining us. For details, or to register for this study, contact Joanne at the Office of Religious Education, 562-5484, or jbagge@stmsaints.org.

CCD CORNER

MARCH FOR LIFE: On January 24, 2020, there will be a group of St. Mary's parishioners who will join with approximately 200,000 others across the country to protest abortion at our Nation's Capital. We will leave St. Mary's at approximately 10 p.m. Thursday night the 23rd by bus and return at approximately midnight on Friday the 24th. All are welcome to join us as we stand up for life at this powerful demonstration. For more information, please contact rlepage@stmsaints.org, or jbagge@stmsaints.org.

CCD CALENDAR: for the Second half of the year have been sent out – please contact us if you have NOT received one!! It is bright green – You can't miss it!!!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES: will start again January 5, 2020 for First Grade, January 6, 2020, Monday classes and January 12th for all Sunday night Classes.

RECONCILIATION MEETING: The Reconciliation meeting for all parents whose children are receiving the sacrament. The meeting will be Jan. 12th, following the 10:00 Mass in the High School.

PARISH COFFEE HOUR: Come join us January 12th after the 10:00 Mass in the high school gym for a hot cup of coffee! Hosting will be the Alum Confirmation Class of 2018!! Deana Tortoriello taught these students all through their years of CCD here at St. Mary's! Thank you to all of them for continuing to support your parish community!!

MORNING BIBLE STUDY Beginning January 8, from 9:30 to 11 a.m., we will begin an 8-week study on Paul's Letter to the Romans. This letter has been at the center of reflection, conversion, and controversy from the very beginning. *In Romans: The Gospel of Salvation*, theology professor Dr. Andrew Swafford and Jeff Cavins provide an authentically Catholic, comprehensive, and simple way to understand the overarching theme of Romans—salvation, providing historical context, highlighting the connections to Jesus and Christianity that Paul makes with the Old Testament, and exploring the ways in which Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel's prophecies, which leads to the universal, "Catholic" family of God.

In this program, Catholics learn the Catholic teaching on salvation; how to explain salvation to non-Christians; what is required for salvation—faith or works, what Paul really means by "works" not leading to salvation; how Christ's death changed our relationship with God; the meaning of the difficult passages in Romans; and how we can enter more deeply into Christ.

Everyone, no matter the level of Biblical knowledge, is welcome to join us for this study. The study is free, the book is \$27. Please do not let the cost discourage anyone from joining us. For details, or to register for the study, contact Joanne, 562-5484, or jbagge@stmsaints.org.



Thank You, LORD!

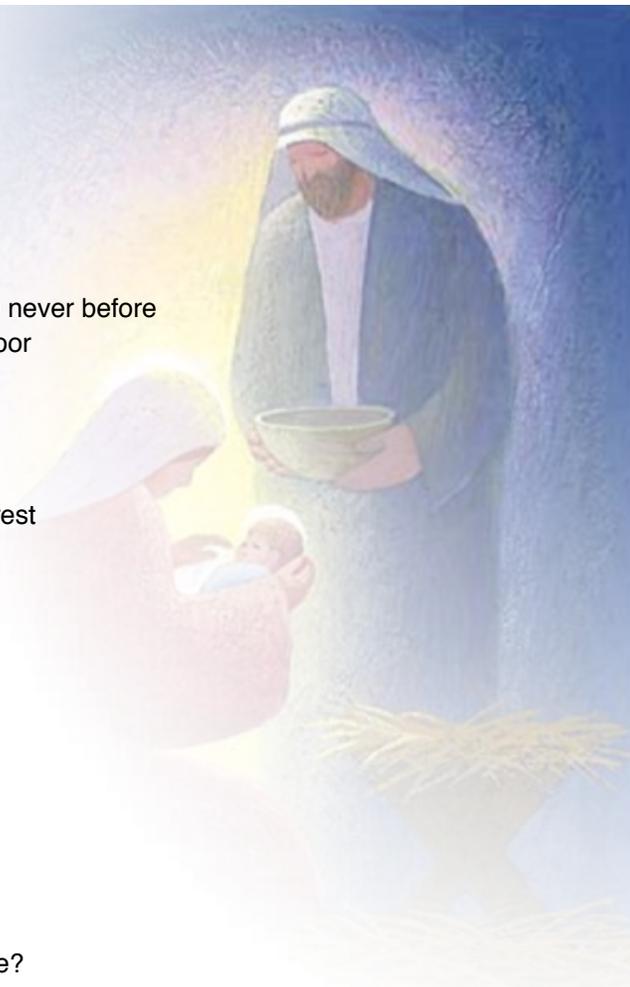
Have a favorite or special recipe? How about a story to go with it? That always makes a special recipe even better! St. Mary's Parish High School is preparing a cookbook full of delicious recipes from members of our parish and school community. Categories include Appetizers and Beverages, Soups and Salads, Vegetables, Main Dishes, Breads and Rolls, Desserts and Miscellaneous. Please share any gluten free , low carb or Keto options in the categories stated above, with a GF, LC or K notation! Don't forget to sign your name! Fr. John – we know you are a fabulous chef – hope to see some of your favorites!

Please email your recipes to jgomes@stmsaints.org by January 31st!

Cookbooks will be available for Easter!

The True Christmas Day

Come all, ye little children, and gather 'round me today
 While I tell you a true story of the very first Christmas day.
 It's a story of a baby boy born one cold wintry night
 And of three Wise Men finding him just guided by the light,
 Or a star up in the heavenly sky so big and bright and fair,
 And as you listen to my story, you'll wish that you were there.
 The stars in the heaven shone down that night with a brightness like never before
 To guide Joseph and Mary on their way as they went from door to door
 Looking for shelter from the cold as Mary knew she must.
 Never once losing faith and place all her trust
 In God up in heaven, she loved Him so, and she knew that she
 Was bearing a child sent here on earth to save both you and me.
 They came to an inn, where Joseph begged for a place for Mary to rest
 But the innkeeper said, "There are no rooms but I will do my best.
 There is a stable in the back and there you'll find some hay.
 Make a bed and bring her there, she'll have a place to lay."
 So Joseph took the donkey on which Mary rode
 And brought it to to the stable, unburdening its load.
 He found the hay and spread it neatly upon the cold hard floor
 Just wishing and praying that he could have done much more.
 And as a little child was born right there that very night
 A little boy named Jesus. A truly heavenly sight.
 They wrapped him up in swaddling cloth and placed him on the hay
 As a bright light from heaven shone 'round him as he lay.
 In the manger that cold night, so tiny, so pure,
 Who would have thought of all the pain that he would have to endure?
 And then a star shone brightly in the northern sky
 And all the shepherds fell to their knees, for they knew the reason why
 The star had appeared to them that night with a brilliance all its own.
 They knew the King of Kings was born and they were not alone.
 Then three Wise Men were waiting for a sign from heaven above
 To show them Jesus had been born so they could show their love.
 So they started out that night with all their gifts and wealth
 To wish the little infant much happiness and health.
 And so the star they followed until it came to rest
 Over the stable, lighting their way. They knew they had done their best.
 They knelt before the infant, all praise and glory be
 Given to this child of God. He came to save us, you see.
 They knelt and they adored him with love and all its worth,
 And presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.
 So you see what Christmas is, it's love for one and all.
 And we share Christ's birthday and wait to hear him call
 Each of us to heaven to be with him some day
 We celebrate his birthday in a very special way.
 It's not through spending money and regretting that we did
 It's sharing our love with Jesus and thanking him that we live
 On his great earth with the ones we love in sickness and in health,
 For when Christ was born on Christmas day,
 we were blessed with undying wealth.



by V.C. Russell