WASHINGTON COUNTY
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #5936

MEN'S MEETING NIGHT: 2nd Wednesday of month @ 7 pm
LADIES AUXILIARY: 3rd Wednesday of month @ 6:30 pm
CHICKEN & BEEF DINNERS:
1st Sunday of the month. Serving from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm

Grand Knight: Danny Kincaid
Ladies Auxiliary President: Tanya Kincaid
Visit our Facebook page @ Old Mines Knights of Columbus Council 5936

Serving God & Neighbor
Rural Parish Workers of Christ the King

15540 Cannon Mines Rd.
Fertile, Cadet, Mo. 63630
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Fax: 636-586-5918
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CHURCH FUNDRAISER UPDATE…
We still have lots of discount cards for sale – Just $20 buys a card that saves $$$ at local businesses, and the discounts can be reused every day for one year. Stop by the Rectory to get yours. Funds will be used for second floor renovations at the Incarnate Word Center. Thanks for your support!

ST. JOACHIM CATHOLIC CHURCH
10120 Crest Rd
Old Mines, Mo. 63630

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH
TIFF, MO

STAFF
Rev. Anthony A. Dattilo, Pastor
Carmen Litton, Principal
Joyce Politte, DRE
Mary Ann Pratt, Parish Secretary
Vicki Thurmond, Parish Bookkeeper
Maggie Hagee, Parish Office
Breanna Juliette, School Secretary
Reuben Lawson, Parish Council President

Office Hours / Telephone Numbers
Rectory: 438-6181 / FAX 438-3685
Office Hours: 7:00 am – 3:00 pm (M-F)
School: 438-3973 / FAX 438-3161
Rural Parish Workers: 636-586-5171
Reuben Lawson, PC President: 438-6446

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE:
Saturday evening at 4:00 pm & 6:30 pm at Tiff
Sunday morning at 8:00 am & 10:00 am
WEEKDAY MASS SCHEDULE:
8:00 am – Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri.
8:15 am – Tuesday - Perpetual Help Devotions & Rosary at 7:45 am
CONFESSIONS: Saturday at 3:00-3:45 pm or by appointment.
HOLY DAY SCHEDULE: Please check the Bulletin inside for Mass times.

FOOD DRIVE of non-perishable foods for the St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry on the 1st Sunday of each month. Please bring your items and put in the box by the side door of the Church. THANK YOU!

E-Mail & Web Sites:
Parish – stjoachimparish@hotmail.com
School – stjoachimschool@yahoo.com
Parish Web Site – http://stjoachim.org
School Web Site – http://stjoachimschool.com
Rural Parish Workers Web Site – http://rpwck.org

DECEMBER 4, 2016
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Monday
December 5
Advent Weekday
Is 35:1-10
Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday
December 6
Advent Weekday
Is 40:1-11
Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday
December 7
St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Is 40:25-31
Mt 11:28-30

Thursday
December 8
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Gn 3:9-15, 20
Eph 1:3-6, 11-12
Lk 1:26-38

Friday
December 9
Advent Weekday
Is 48:17-19
Mt 11:16-19

Saturday
December 10
Advent Weekday
Sir 48:1-4, 9-11
Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday
December 11
Third Sunday of Advent
Is 35:1-6a, 10
Jas 5:7-10
Mt 11:2-11

Good News!

December 4, 2016
Second Sunday of Advent (A)
Is 11:1-10, Rom 15:4-9, Mt 3:1-12

John the Baptist was the first prophet in Israel in more than 200 years. Some even thought he was the Messiah. He preached with authority, and people traveled from all over Judea to hear his words.

His message was to prepare the way. As any pope, king, or president announces his intentions in advance so preparations can be made, John was sent to announce the coming of the Son of God and to tell the people how to prepare.

Jesus comes to the world in three different ways: first, when he was born in Bethlehem and walked the earth; second, when he comes again at the end of time; and finally, when he comes to us constantly in the sacraments and liturgy. Preparing for his arrival is not a matter of fixing roads, painting houses, or organizing a parade. Our king desires a transformed spirit: "Not by appearance shall he judge…." John warns that we cannot hide behind the faith of another; each one of us needs to show the fruits of our own faith. Yet we need not fear, for he who comes has every intention of saving us. He appears as Lord and invites us to accept his kingdom. He is also a teacher who shows us the way back to the Father. Above all he is a friend who forgives unconditionally and accepts our sincere yet feeble efforts.

This week, reflect on this image of John the Baptist, heed his words, and imitate him: Cry out for repentance, cleanse others from their sins, and prepare the way to God.

For Reflection

How does John the Baptist's call to repentance challenge me? Where do I need to ask for God's mercy?

Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

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MISSION STATEMENT: We, the Parish Family of St. Joachim & St. Joseph, of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, are a people with a heritage of faith. Encouraged by the Tradition of Christian hospitality, caring, and love towards neighbor, we are committed to continue to support each other on our pilgrim journey to the Father. In response to God's Word, we strive through a sacramental life to bring all to a fuller understanding of God's love by praying, teaching, and by witnessing to Christ, in the service of one another.

DECEMBER 4, 2016 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 5
8:00 am – Leo Francis & Rosie Boyer
Tuesday, December 6
7:45 am – Rosary & Perpetual Help Devotions
8:15 am – Ina Mae Boyer
Wednesday, December 7
8:00 am – Bill Busken
Thursday, December 8 – HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION
8:00 am – Lena Boyer
Noon (TIFF) – Joseph G. Pashia
7:00 pm – James R. Portell
Friday, December 9
8:00 am –Larry Coleman
Saturday, December 10
4:00 pm –Margaret DeClue
6:30 pm (TIFF) – Ethel M. Boyer
Sunday, December 11
8:00 am –Parish Family
10:00 am – Rosemary & Melvin Sansoucie

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION: Jan. 6, 2017 (9 am- until 5:45 pm); Jan. 7th at St. Joseph's, Tiff, at 5:30 pm

NURSING HOME: Jan. 6, 2017 @ Georgian Gardens

LITURGICAL APPOINTMENTS FOR DEC. 10th & 11th:

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION:
4:00 pm –Mary Etta Boyer, Ken DeGonia, Susan Mathis, Dave & Vicki Johnson
6:30 pm (Tiff) – Rae Govero & Volunteer
8:00 am – Catherine Dickey, Glenn Bequette, Laura Busken, Barb Bequette, Volunteer Needed
10:00 am –Rita Kamper, Charles & Laura Villmer, Volunteers Needed

LECTORS:
4:00 pm –Bill Portell
6:30 pm (TIFF) – Gail Boyer
8:00 am – Pam Boyer
10:00 am – Aaron Ross

OFFERTORY PROCESSION:
4:00 pm –Mary Boyer & Volunteer
6:30 pm (TIFF) – Volunteers Needed
8:00 am – Ed & Nancy Politte
10:00 am –Monica & David Pratt Family

SERVERS:
4:00 pm –Jerod Hedrick & Rachel Heifner
6:30 pm (TIFF) – Ellee & Amelia Govero
8:00 am – Volunteers Needed
10:00 am - Hannah Villmer, Jade Coleman, & Nathan Hahn

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD: Debbie Phipps

MUSICIANS: Ken Portell & Krista Coleman (4 pm); Ron Boyer Family (8am); Tina Courtway (10 am)

MONEY COUNTERS: Jim Johnston & Bill Portell

Tithes & Gifts

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ARE SO FAITHFUL IN THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARISH AND SCHOOL! GOD SEES YOUR SACRIFICE AND BLESSES YOU ABUNDANTLY!

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR WEEKEND OF Nov 26th & 27th:

# of Contributors: St. Joachim- 89 St. Joseph-12

ST JOACHIM		ST. JOSEPH
Loose:	$244.12	Loose: $39.00
Adults:	$2877.00	Adults: $281.00
Tuition:	$	Other: $
Other:	$	Other: $
TOTALS:	**$3121.12**	**$320.00**
RESTRICTED FUNDS:		
St. Vincent de Paul: $20.00		$20.00
Bldg. Fund: $54.00		
Human Development: $2.00		

December 4, 2016 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

"Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." Matthew 3:10

Do you bear good fruit for Christ? Or, do you spend your time, talent and treasure constantly acquiring more toys, clutter and junk. Our time, our talent and our treasure are gifts that God has given us. What we do with them is our gift back to God. What gifts are you planning to give to the Lord during this upcoming Christmas season?

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: George Ponzar, George Pinson, Ashlynn Kamper, Baby Molli Catherine Cooley, Benny Thebeau, Dr. Ken Osia, Joyce Bouresaw, Beth McCoy, Leatha Peyton, Breanna Harmon, Beverly Osia, Kevin Thebeau, Don Bourbon, Linda Ross, Norman & Imelda Wilson, Eli Robart, Celeste Bone, William W. Delashmit, Marion Delashmit Watson, Steve Politte, Rose Ann Richards, Doris Ann Bequette, Paul Boyer, Tim Harris, Opal Johnston, Joey Barton, Laura Busken, Anna Thebeau, Judy Moyers, Marsha Jones, Glenn Bequette Jr., Brian Skiles, Betty Osia, Larry Joe Portell, , Margaret Kite, Harper Coleman, Charlie Mercille, Kelly Griffen, Lee Phipps, Rita Bone, Steve Jolly, Mary Govero, Martha Saunders, Carol Hinch, Marsha York, Keri Riddle, Tamara Boyer, John (Bull) Politte, Mike Riddle, Jeff Graves, Lucy Alma DeClue, John DeClue, Isabella Henderson, Jerry Miller, Janice Turntine, Jason Turntine, Gary Kincaid, Glenn Bequette and all who are sick and suffering. **(If there are any names that can be removed please let me know. Thanks)**

The Parish Office will close at 12:30 pm on Thursday, December 8th and will be **CLOSED all day** on Friday, December 9, 2016

Dynamic Catholic, Alive! – Mary as a Model
We may know a lot about the Blessed Virgin Mary—celebrating her Immaculate Conception, her birth, the Annunciation, her glorious Assumption, etc. How can we sum it up? This way: Mary is the only human creature who shows us that God's original plan for us—that we could always choose in accord with His Divine Will—was possible. Think about it—without Mary, how many of us would be wondering if any of us could even get close? Let her "yes" inspire us. (CCC 484-507)
archstl.org/dynamic

WORD OF LIFE:
"A child is loved because he is one's child: not because he is beautiful, or because he is like this or like that… Not because he thinks as I do, or embodies my dreams. A child is a child: a life generated by us but intended for him, for his good, for the good of the family, of society, of mankind as a whole."
— Pope Francis, General Audience, February 11, 2015.
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CATHOLIC FAMILY CORNER
"One Church, One Home"

The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church….(F)or all the many signs of crisis in the institution of marriage, "the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people, and this is an inspiration to the Church." As a response to that desire, "the Christian proclamation on the family is good news indeed."
Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia I

—How do you support the "good news" of marriage in your family?

Archdiocese of St. Louis
Office of Laity and Family Life

NOTE FROM THE OFFICE: Contribution envelopes for 2017 will ready next weekend, December 10th & 11th. You will find them at the back of the church. We encourage everyone to pick up their set. We also encourage everyone to use their envelopes in support of your parish. Over 200 sets are given out each year but we only average a return of 90 envelopes weekly. If you do not see a box with your name on it and wish to receive a box please call the rectory office or send a note through the collection basket. Mary Ann Pratt, secretary

ST. JOACHIM BASKETBALL SCHEDULES
2016-2017

BOYS BASKETBALL
Saturday, December 10 – 5 p.m. vs. St. Rose Red (at Kingston Primary) (BOYS ONLY)
Thursday, December 15 – 7 p.m. vs. St. Agnes White (at Kingston Primary) (BOYS ONLY)
Saturday, December 17 – 6 p.m. at St. Rose White (at De Soto K.C. Hall)
Friday, January 6 – 7 p.m. vs. St. Agnes Blue (at Kingston Primary)
Saturday, January 7 – 5 p.m. vs. Valle White (at Kingston Primary) (BOYS ONLY)
Friday, January 13 – 6 p.m. at St. Rose Red (at De Soto K.C. Hall) (BOYS ONLY)
Saturday, January 21 – 6 p.m. at Valle White (Ste. Genevieve) (BOYS ONLY)
Thursday, January 26 – 7 p.m. vs. St. Rose White (at Kingston Primary)
Saturday, January 28 – 6 p.m. at St. Agnes Blue (at the Ste. Genevieve Community Center)
Friday, February 3 – 7 p.m. vs. St. Joseph (at Kingston Primary)
Saturday, February 4 – 6 p.m. at Good Shepherd (at Hillsboro Junior High)
Thursday, February 9 – 8 p.m. at Valle Blue (Ste. Genevieve)
Friday, February 10 – 7 p.m. vs Valle Blue (at Kingston Primary)
Saturday, February 11 – 1 p.m. at St. Paul (Farmington)
Friday, February 17 – 6 p.m. at St. Agnes White (at the Ste. Genevieve Community Center) (BOYS ONLY)

GIRLS BASKETBALL
Saturday, December 17 – 5 p.m. at St. Rose White (at De Soto K.C. Hall)
Friday, January 6 – 6 p.m. vs. St. Agnes Blue (at Kingston Primary)
Thursday, January 26 – 6 p.m. vs. St. Rose White (at Kingston Primary)
Saturday, January 28 – 5 p.m. at St. Agnes Blue (at the Ste. Genevieve Community Center)
Friday, February 3 – 6 p.m. vs. St. Joseph (at Kingston Primary)
Saturday, February 4 – 5 p.m. at Good Shepherd (at Hillsboro Junior High)
Thursday, February 9 – 7 p.m. at Valle Blue (Ste. Genevieve)
Friday, February 10 – 6 p.m. vs. Valle Blue (at Kingston Primary)
Saturday, February 11 – 12 p.m. at St. Paul (Farmington)

Praying the Rosary: Each month on the 13th, a group meets at noon at the Shrine to Our Lady of the Rosary, 7762 Richardson Road, Bonne Terre, MO to recite the Rosary. All are invited. For more information please call Paula Pace at 573-330-9416.

Preparing our Hearts and asking for the Grace

We prepare this week by stepping up the longing. We move through this week by naming deeper and more specific desires.

Each morning this week, if even for that brief moment at the side of our beds, we want to light a second inner candle. We want to let it represent "a bit more hope." Perhaps we can pause, breathe deeply and say,

"Lord, I place my trust in you."

Each day this week, as we encounter times that are rushed, even crazy, we can take that deep breath, and make that profound prayer. Each time we face some darkness, some experience of "parched land" or desert, some place where we feel "defeated" or "trapped," we hear the words, "Our God will come to save us!"

The grace we desire for this week is to be able to hear the promise and to invite our God to come into those real places of our lives that dearly need God's coming. We want to be able to say:

"Lord, I place my trust in your promise. Please, Lord, rouse your power and come into this place in my life, this relationship, into this deep self-defeating pattern. Please come here and save me."

Each night this week we can look back over the day and give thanks for the moments of deep breath, that opened a space for more trust and confidence in God's fidelity to us. No matter how difficult the challenges we are facing - from the growing realization of our personal sinfulness, to any experience of emptiness or powerlessness, even in the face of death itself - we can give thanks for the two candles that faithfully push back the darkness. And, we can give thanks for the graces given us to believe that "Our God will come to save us" because we were given the courageous faith to desire and ask boldly.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come and visit your people.
We await your coming. Come, O Lord.

Creighton University's Online Ministries

Christmas Country Church Tour Announcement
The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (Saint Mary's of the Barrens Church) in Perryville, Missouri, will again be on the Christmas Country Church Tour along with 32 other churches and chapels. The tour will take place December 15 and 16, from 2:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. All of the churches welcome visitors to view their Christmas decorations and to spend a few moments in silent prayer during the Advent season. Hear live music on Thursday from 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. on Friday. You will have the opportunity to hang a paper ornament on our "petition tree" with your intentions to be remembered during the Christmas season. Light refreshments will be served in the Visitor Center where you can also view unique Nativity sets that will be on exhibit. If you have any questions, please call the Association of the Miraculous Medal at 573-547-8343, or visit our website at www.amm.org. We hope you will plan to visit us on one of these days!

MISSING!!! One of our parishioners is missing a roasting pan that they brought to the Thanksgiving dinner on November 17th. It is stainless steel with a glass top. Please call the school (438-3973) or the rectory (438-6181) if you inadvertently brought it home.

Download Our New Parish App!

Our new St. Joachim Church app is now available to download for iPhone and Android smart phones. Stay connected with our parish throughout the week with instant notifications, an easy-to-access event calendar, and the ability to quickly reply to or share messages via Facebook or Twitter. Also enjoy a bunch of additional features like prayers, daily readings, helpful reminders to silence your phone before Mass or Confession, and much more.

Help foster a stronger parish life at St. Joachim Church and better engage the New Evangelization.

Download our app today at myparishapp.com or search your phone's app store for myparish.

Prayer for Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles – Week Two:
God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder u from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share His wisdom and become one with Him when He comes in glory, for He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. AMEN

THIS WEEK'S READINGS:

Our first reading today is from Isaiah, describing the peaceable kingdom of God, the day of the Messiah of the Lord. In this kingdom ancient enmities are ended, and enemies live as neighbors. If we have heeded the message of last week's Gospel, we understand that the best way to make ourselves ready is to live as if this kingdom is already here. What do you hear in today's sacred scriptures that will help you to live out the presence of God right now?

QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

What is one concrete, "peaceable" thing I can do this week to bring a glimpse of Isaiah's "Peaceable Kingdom" to my little corner of the world?

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS NEWS:

CHICKEN & BEEF DINNERS – Dec. 4, 2016. Serving is from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm (unless they run out!) Your support is very much appreciated! Desserts & Workers are always needed. Please help if you can!

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE: Thank You to everyone who chose an ornament from the tree. Please remember to return the wrapped gift with the number attached by December 14th! Thank you for making a child's Christmas special!

Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows and the Annual Way of Lights Christmas - We are planning a trip to the Annual Way of Lights at our Lady of the Snows for Sunday, Dec. 11th. All are invited to join us. We plan on car-pooling and meeting at the Church parking lot. We will be making reservations to eat at the Shrine restaurant at 5:40 pm and then touring the Way of Lights. The cost of the meal is approximately $20. **If you plan on going please call the rectory office before December 7th. We have to call to make reservations by this date!**

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS: To all our Servers, Readers, Special Ministers of the Eucharist: It is not too early to plan for Christmas Masses! Please let me know which Mass you will be available for on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Since Christmas falls on a weekend this year we will keep our regular Sunday Mass schedule, which is: Christmas Eve @ 4 pm & 11 pm and Christmas Day 8:00 & 10:00 am. Christmas Eve Mass at St. Joseph, Tiff will be at 6:30 pm. Thank You! Mary Ann Pratt

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT CALENDAR DATES:

Dec. 6 - Parish Advent Penance Service, 6:30 pm. We will have extra priests available for confessions.
Dec. 7 – First Reconciliation for 2nd Graders
Dec. 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception – Holy Day of obligation
Dec. 11 – Trip to Our Lady of the Snows
Dec. 13 – St. Anne Sodality Mtg., 6 pm
Dec. 16 – St. Joachim School Christmas Program, 6:30 pm
Dec. 21 – Noon dismissal for Christmas Holiday

PENANCE SERVICE DEC. 6th AT 6:30 PM:
Advent began on November 27th and it is a wonderful time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing graces our Lord offers us. Advent is a time when we prepare ourselves for the coming of our Savior at Christmas.

At St. Joachim & St. Joseph parishes we will be offering an "Advent Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation" on Tuesday, Dec. 6th at 6:30 pm. We will have extra Priests on hand to hear confessions. It is a wonderful opportunity to join our sisters and brother in asking for forgiveness and healing during this important time of the year.

We pray that all our Catholic parishioners – practicing & non-practicing, will take advantage of this unique and holy opportunity to "encounter the merciful love of the Father." Please encourage each other to participate. May our celebration of our Advent Penance Service help us in our resolve to come often to receive this Sacrament of Christ's mercy.

Please invite someone to come with you!
DECEMBER 8, 2016 – FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION is a Holy Day of Obligation. Our Mass schedule for that day will be: St. Joachim – 8:15 am and 7:00 pm. Fr. Tillman will celebrate a noon time Mass at St. Joseph (Tiff) on Dec. 8th.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS & POINSETTIA'S FOR THE CHURCH: If you would like to donate towards the Christmas decorations & Poinsettia's in memory of a loved one, you may place your donation in an envelope and drop it in the collection basket. The suggested donation is $10.00. Please do so by Dec. 19th.

St. Joachim School
"Your Future Begins With Us"
News from St. Joachim School

Mission Statement
The mission of St. Joachim Catholic School is to assist the parents and parish community in the shared responsibility of providing an excellent religious and academic education that is Alive in Christ for the children of Washington County.

St. Joachim's staff and students are engaged in celebrating the Advent Season which includes daily prayer for the needs of others, offering their talents and donations and preparing for the coming of Jesus.

December is a very busy month with the following dates to remember.....

Tuesday, Dec 6 - St. Ann Sodality members are invited to a Christmas luncheon at Mrs. Litton's home at 11:00.
Wednesday, Dec 7 - First Reconciliation for Day School and PSR students at 6:30 in church. All Family members are invited to participate also.
Thursday, Dec 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception Is a Holy Day of obligation. Students will attend the 8:00 am Mass. We will also have a 12:00 dismissal for a Faculty meeting.
Friday, Dec 9 - NO School today!
Monday, Dec 12 - In being responsive to others' needs during the Advent season our school will be collecting breakfast cereals (boxes or bags) the week of December 12-16. These will be distributed to local food pantries for children at Christmas time. If you would like to contribute to this Christmas collection, please leave cereal at church or school. Mrs. Litton will deliver all items to the food pantries for distribution.
Friday, Dec 16 - Our Christmas school play will be at 6:30 in the school cafeteria. Everyone is invited to this special singing and performance.
Monday, Dec 19 - Pizza will be provided for our students at lunch today.
Tuesday, Dec 20 - The students will Christmas carol at Potosi Manor @ 10:00. Parents will provide transportation. Lunch will be served for school staff and students at the Family Steak House after caroling. Preordering from a selected menu is required.
Wednesday, Dec 21 - Last day of school before Christmas Holidays. Christmas gathering and 12:00 dismissal. Students will bring their lunch this day.
Monday, Jan 2 - Classes resume!

Enjoy your time with family and friends this wonderful December.

Religious Education News
Serve Him with Joy and Gladness

RCIA and Adult Faith Formation. If interested in becoming Catholic, being fully received into Catholic Church, receiving sacrament of Confirmation call Joyce Politte, 573-438-3213 or 636-328-1343. Come and See. Sessions meet on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m. in the lower room of the Incarnate Word building. **On Thursday, Dec. 8th, class will meet in church for Mass of the Immaculate Conception.**

PSR News. Sacrament of First Reconciliation and Sacrament of Reconciliation for PSR students will be celebrated on Wednesday, Dec. 7. Families are invited and encouraged to receive the sacrament as well in preparation for Christmas. Congratulations to Alex, Brady, Gavin, Shawn, and Savannah who along with three school children will be encountering Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the First time. Please pray for them and their families.

Life in the Spirit Prayer Group will not meet during December.

St. Joachim will again be participating with the St. Louis Archdiocese in the Pro-Life March in Washington, DC, January 25-29, 2017. We have a group of students and chaperones signed up but we still have space available for any 8th – 12th grade individual who would like to join us. For details please contact Barb Bequette (the person in charge) at bbequet1@slu.edu or call her at 1-636-542-1413 and leave a message. JOIN us and 20,000 other individuals as we march to the State Capitol to have our voices heard!

It is very important that if you plan on attending the Pro-Life March in January, to send your deposit of $50 to the Rectory business office as soon as possible.

Vicki Thurmond's Sunday evening Bible Study will not meet in December. They will resume studies on Sunday, January 8th.

RECONCILIATION AND HEALING

Celebrating Reconciliation

Reconciliation is what God does. Receiving it and celebrating it is what we do. For those of us who are Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a most natural way to celebrate God's reconciliation. We used to think of this sacrament as only about "confession" - that it was like a dumping ground for my sins, where I got forgiven, and I had to "pay a toll." One of the great recoveries in our Christian history is to re-discover the meaning of this sacrament.

It is God who forgives sins. And God forgives us the very moment that we come to the experience that we need forgiveness (which itself comes through God's grace). At that moment, I feel sorrow and a desire for forgiveness and healing. In that moment, I am reconciled with God. The reunion, the bond, the connection, the joy are all there. Three more things remain: to receive it deep within my heart, to celebrate it, and to participate in the healing process.

When I experience God's forgiveness and love, I am invited to savor it and let it touch me deeply. Experiencing compassion, patience, understanding, and forgiveness is itself transforming. If I fail to appreciate what I have just received - freely and undeserved - then I will take it for granted and risk moving on without a real healing happening.

Then, I need to celebrate the reconciliation I have received. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation - individually or in common - I have the wonderful opportunity to ritualize that celebration. In the Sacrament, my personal journey is joined with the mystery of God's saving love, as seen in the scriptures, and in God's desire to save us all. There, in ritual form (even if it is just me and the priest) I "step forward" and admit that I am a sinner, express my sorrow, and I name the places in my life where God is shining a Light into what I have done and what I have failed to do. Then, God's forgiveness is proclaimed "out loud" - for me to hear and rejoice in: "May God grant you pardon and fill you with God's peace."

An integral part of the reconciliation involves the healing process. If I sprain my ankle, the doctor will offer me a number of therapies for healing - ice for the first 24 hours to reduce the swelling, wrapping it, elevating it, and then gradually and carefully using it, until it is healed and strong again. Part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to seek and practice a "remedy" or "medicine" for the healing I desire. Often that will simply be prayer. Often, expressing my gratitude to God is one of the most important steps on the road to recovery from my independence from God. Sometimes, I will need to practice a therapy that is more carefully planned - making choices about what I can practice doing and what I can practice avoiding.

May our Lord grant us all the gift of reconciliation, and may we all receive it and celebrate it well in the holy days ahead.

Immaculate Conception Prayer

Father, you prepared the Virgin Mary to be the worthy mother of your Son. You let her share beforehand in the salvation Christ would bring by his death, and kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Help us by her prayers to live in your presence without sin. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Following her example

Consider how pure she was from the very moment of her Immaculate Conception, Mary came forth from the Most High God as the first-born daughter of all creation, formed by His creative word. Her appearance on earth was like the first immaculate ray of light. The sun, the moon, the stars, all of nature, the whole visible and invisible world bowed at her feet as she walked the earth. So beautiful are the steps of Mary as she walks through life! And you, what steps have you taken with your feet since reaching the use of reason? What have you accomplished for the good of your soul, for your growth in holiness? Are your steps taking you toward God or away from Him? O Immaculate Virgin, loveliest daughter of the Most High Prince, perfect our goings in God's paths. Direct and keep, our steps strictly upon your paths as we strive to follow in your sacred footprints!
St Francis Anthony