

## **FROM FR. MARK SEIKER ... Dec. 26, 2021**

**Sanctuary of Life** ... This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. Though he was conceived of a virgin, Jesus nevertheless lived as a son in a human family -- a family which points the way for the rest of us.

The family is the sanctuary of life. There can be no life without family, and there can be no family without life. The family, above all, is where life is to be welcomed, no matter how fragile or inconvenient it may be.

One of the many reasons why St. John Paul II, in "The Gospel of Life" encyclical, identifies abortion and euthanasia as pre-eminent issues is because these crimes are committed by one family member upon another.

May the Holy Family lead us to a Culture of Life!

### **Pray for our Seminarians: Isaac Karol**

**Wahlmeier**, the son of Patrick & Debra Wahlmeier from St. Michael Parish (Hastings). He entered the Seminary in 2018; & is in Theology 1 at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary.

**Pray for our Religious Sisters:** School Sisters of Christ the King, Marian Sisters of the Diocese of Lincoln, Sisters at the Carmel of Jesus, Mary & Joseph, Pink Sisters, Sisters of Mary, Queen of Mercy.

### **HOLY FATHER'S INTENTIONS ...**

The prayer intentions are entrusted to the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, which Pope Francis officially established as a pontifical work on 17 November 2020.

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network is a pontifical work with the mission of mobilizing Catholics through prayer and action, in the face of the challenges confronting humanity and the mission of the Church. These challenges are addressed in the form of prayer intentions entrusted by the Pope to the entire Church. Its mission is inscribed in the dynamic of the Heart of Jesus: a mission of compassion for the world.

Formerly known as the Apostleship of Prayer, the network was born as a Jesuit initiative in 1844 in a house of formation for young Jesuits in Vals, in the south of France. Fr. Francis Xavier Gautrelet SJ, the spiritual director of the young men, suggested them a way of being apostles and missionaries in their daily lives by offering to God everything they were doing and striving to be available to Jesus in order to carry out their everyday duties well.

The fervour of the spiritual initiative spread far and wide in the Catholic Church and in 1890, Pope Leo XIII entrusted his monthly prayer intentions to the Apostleship of Prayer, assigning the job of running the network to the Jesuits. In 1915, its youth section, the Eucharistic Crusade, was born, today known as the Eucharistic Youth Movement.

In 2016, Pope Francis renamed the Apostleship of Prayer as the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. He raised it to the status of a pontifical work in 2018 and made it a Vatican Foundation with a canonical and juridical status in 2020. The Network, with its headquarters in Vatican City Jesuits, continues to be led by the Jesuits.

In recent years, the Network has been popularizing the Pope's monthly prayer intentions through its Video of the Pope, across its presence in 98 countries with more than 35 million Catholic members.

**(December) Catechists:** Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage & creativity & in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**(January) For True Human Fraternity:** We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognized, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family.

**FORMED.ORG** ... St. Mary Parish and St. Joseph Parish have had a joint subscription to FORMED.ORG for a number of years. If you have NOT logged into or signed up at FORMED.ORG, it is really easy to do. In your web browser go to [www.formed.org/](http://www.formed.org/) Click Sign Up. From the three options choose Parishioner. Click Create a New Account. Enter the Aurora Zip Code (68818). Click Find. Click Next. Enter your Name and your email address. Click Sign Up. If you were ever signed up before, you are still only into the system one time. Please Bookmark this page, & the next time you come to the FORMED.ORG page, click on Sign In. There are many great Catholic programs, videos, audios, ebooks.

**The Christmas Season** ... lasts from the Christmas Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Jan. 10). It has been a custom of the Church to celebrate ADVENT during the Advent Season without any Christmas decorations, & to celebrate CHRISTMAS during the Christmas Season, by leaving the manger scene & trees up until the end of the Christmas Season (Jan 9). May we all walk the path of God, not the path of man! May each of you have a HOLY Christmas season and a Blessed New Year!

**Parish Books Close Dec. 31, 2021** ... please remember that the Parish books will be closed on **Fri., Dec. 31 at Noon!** Any contributions you want recorded on your 2021 contribution statement must be received in the parish office before **Noon, Dec. 31, 2021**.

### **Marriage Help – Stress in Your Marriage? ...**

*Retrouaille* (pronounced retro-vi) has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. *Retrouaille* is a program for married couples that feel bored, disillusioned, frustrated, or angry in their marriage. Some experience coldness. Others experience conflict in their relationship. Most don't know how to change the situation or even communicate with their spouse about it. This program has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage. For confidential information about or to register for the February program beginning with a weekend on February 11-13, 2022, call 1-888-317-5654 or 308-986-2351 or [www.retrouaille.org](http://www.retrouaille.org) on the web.

**A Catechism in Song** ... Did you ever wonder why the carol "A Partridge in a Pear Tree" is sung at Christmas? It's because the twelve days between Christmas & Epiphany (originally Epiphany was always on Jan. 6), were used by the English Catholics in 1558 after the religious persecutions, to explain their faith without exciting suspicion. The "true love" of the carol is God; the partridge is a symbol of Christ. The two turtle doves represent the sacrifice Jewish parents made in the Temple -- the Mass is the new sacrifice. The three French hens symbolize the Magi and their gifts, but also Faith, Hope, and Charity, the prime virtues. Four calling birds mean the four Gospels, while the five gold rings hint at the first five books of the Bible. The six geese a-laying are the six days of creation. The seven swans a-swimming are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit & the seven works of mercy. The eight milk maids are the eight beatitudes, while the nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. The ten lords a-leaping symbolize the ten commandments and the eleven pipers, the eleven apostles without Judas. The twelve drummers point to the twelve (Articles) beliefs of the Apostles' Creed. How is that for a Catechism?

### **Holy Family Mass Schedule ...**

- **Dec. 25, 5:00pm=Mass (St. Mary).** This is NOT a Christmas Mass, this is the Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday. (You don't get "two-fer's" ... one Mass fulfilling two obligations: Christmas & Sunday)
- **Dec. 26, 8:15am=Mass (St. Mary).**
- **Dec. 26, 10:45am=Mass (St. Joseph).**