

Saint Mary's Church

15164 Juniper Dr. Marne, MI 49435 / 616.677.3934 / www.saintmarysmarne.org

December 24, 2023~ The Fourth Sunday of Advent



Weekend Mass Schedule:

Saturday 4:30PM St Mary
Sunday 8:30AM St Michael
Sunday 10:30AM St Mary
Sunday 4:30PM St Michael

Weekday Mass Schedule:

Tuesday 9AM St Mary
Adoration begins after Mass until 2:00 pm
Wednesday 9AM - St Michael
Adoration begins after Mass until 2:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 AM St Mary
Friday 9:00 AM St Michael

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Tuesdays: 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Mary
Wednesdays 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Michael
Thursdays: 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Mary
Fridays: 12:00PM to 1:00PM St. Michael
Saturdays: 3:30PM to 4:15PM ~ St. Mary
Sundays 3:30PM to 4:15PM ~ St. Michael
(or anytime by appt. please call parish office)

St. Mary Parish Office

Monday - 8:00AM - 4:30PM
Tuesday - 8:00AM - 4:30PM
Wednesday - 8:00AM - 11:30AM
Thursday - 8:00AM to 4:30PM

St Mary's Mission Statement: We, the Roman Catholic community of St. Mary's, by our baptism have become the People of God, dedicated to living and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are a community built on faith and the sharing of individual talents, abilities and skills for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and strengthened by prayer and the sacraments, we continue the mission of Jesus to reveal God's presence in all of human life.

Pastor:

Rev. Michael Hodges / frmhodges@grpriests.org
616.677.3934

For emergency please call: 616.745.1409

Deacon:

Deacon Tom Roberts / troberts@saintmarysmarne.org
616.677.3934

Business Manager:

Todd Kline / businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org

Parish Secretary:

Cathie VanGessel / secretary@saintmarysmarne.org

Director of Religious Education:

dre@saintmarysmarne.org

Director of R.C.I.A: Jill Brown-616.677.3934

Adult Bible Study: Jill Brown-616.677.3934

Maintenance/Custodian: Jim & Marian Looks: 677.3934

Liturgical Minister:

Gary Karr / 616.677.3934 / gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org

Music Director:

Dr. Bernie Stanko 616.490.3836 /
berniestanko@hotmail.com

Pastoral Council:

Sharon Davis, Vito Dolci, Geary Farrell,
Doug Frantz, Becky Warners,

Finance Council:

Lisa Bradley, Jose Gomez, Scott Lampe,
Mel Northup, Brent Patterson

Martha League: Parish Office: 616.677.3934
(assistance with meals during illness or injury)

Prayer Line:

Parish Office 616.677.3934
or Linda at 677.3269 for evening requests
call Darlene 616.453.0157
or email: bfa1414@yahoo.com

Our Cluster Parish:

St Michael's - 17150 - 88th Avenue
Coopersville, MI 49404
616.384.4026
www.saintmichaels.us

Mass Intentions

Sunday December 24 - Christmas Eve

4:00PM	Our Parish Family	MI
4:00PM	Our Parish Family	MA
9:00PM	Our Parish Family	MI
9:00PM	Our Parish Family	MA

Monday December 25 - Christmas Day-The Nativity of The Lord

8:30AM	Our Parish Family	MI
10:30AM	Our Parish Family	MA

Tuesday December 26 - No Mass/No Adoration/No Confessions

Wednesday December 27 - No Mass/No Adoration/No Confessions

Thursday December 28 - No Mass/No Adoration/No Confessions

Friday December 29 - No Mass/No Adoration/No Confessions

Saturday December 30 - The Holy Family of Jesus Mary, Joseph

4:30PM	† Winnie Spencer by M/M Jim Harlett.....	MA
	Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary	

Sunday December 31 - The Holy Family of Jesus Mary, Joseph

8:30AM	† Edna Schumaker by Pam Raczkiewicz	MI
10:30AM	† Lyle Lothschutz by Mary Lothschutz.....	MA

Sunday December 31 - The Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God

4:30PM	† Carl Goosen by Dave & Pat Goosen	MI
	Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Michael	

Monday January 1 - The Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God

8:30AM	Our Parish Family	MI
10:30AM	Our Parish Family	MA

MA=St. Mary MI=St. Michael's

Scripture Readings For the Week of December 24, 2023

Sunday Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

Monday The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Vigil Mass: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or Mt 1:18-25

Mass During the night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

Mass at Dawn: Is 62: 11-12; Ps 97: 1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3: 4-7; Lk 2: 15-20

Mass during the Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

Tuesday Feast of Saint Stephen, First Martyr

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 & 8ab, 16bc & 17; Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday Feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a & 2-8

Thursday Feast of Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 Jn 1:5-----2:2; Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18

Friday Memorial of Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr

1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35

Saturday Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40

St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Dec 31 / 8:30 AM	Dec 31 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Adalyn Taylor Clare Taylor	NEED TWO
Eucharistic Ministers	Jennifer DeMull Chris Albrecht Jeff Johnson Joe Hitchings Mark Phillips Andrew Bonter Debbie Veneklas	Greg Helsen NEED ONE
Lector	Joe Meerman	Joe LeMieux
Sacristan	Judy Driedger	Sue DeVos
Ushers	Wade Lindberg Ray Maka Jim Ponshair Peter Nielsen	NEED TWO
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	December 30 - 4:30PM	December 31 - 10:30AM
Sacristan	Need One	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	Need Two	Madeline Serge Noah Davis
Precious Body	Keith Anderson Paul Madura Need One	Margie Jirous Janette Ney Bruce Kamp
Precious Blood	Geary Farrell Vito Dolci Mary Kirkwood Angie Hanks	Christina Withers Becky Warners Need Two
Hospitality	Need Four	Anthony Leale Nettie Leale Leonard Horter Need One
Lector	Doug Frantz	John Klein
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko

Liturgical Ministers are needed for The Solemnity of Mary Masses. Monday, January 1. Sign up Sheets are Posted in the Narthex.

Fourth Sunday

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."

Matthew 1:23



St Mary & St Michael Christmas Mass Schedule

This year the Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on December 24th. The celebration of the Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Eve) is also on this day. But, contrary to what some may believe, this is not an opportunity for a “two-fer” in regard to fulfilling our Sunday and Christmas obligations. Sunday is still Sunday and Christmas is still Christmas, they are two separate holy days of obligation in the Church. Since the Church operates on the Jewish reckoning of telling time, the Christmas season does not begin until sundown on the 24th —4:00 PM. So we cannot skip our Sunday worship reasoning that it will be made-up on Christmas, or visa-versa. Both must be fulfilled. Besides we are in the presence of Christ, what better way to spend the day? Our schedule at St. Mary and St. Michael gives us plenty of opportunity to come to Mass and still have ample time to celebrate with our families.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent Saturday, Dec 23

4:30PM ~ St. Mary - Fr. Mike Hodges

Sunday, Dec 24

8:30AM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike Hodges

10:30AM ~ St. Mary - Msgr. Louis Stasker

(There will be no 4:30 PM Sunday Mass at St. Michael)

The Nativity of The Lord (Christmas Eve Vigil) Sunday, Dec 24

4:00PM, 9:00PM ~ St. Mary - Msgr. Louis Stasker

4:00PM, 9:00PM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike Hodges

The Nativity of The Lord

Monday, Dec 25 Christmas Day

8:30AM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike Hodges

10:30AM ~ St. Mary - Msgr. Louis Stasker



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Saturday, December 30

4:30PM ~ St. Mary - Fr. Mike

Sunday, December 31

8:30AM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike

10:30AM ~ St. Mary - Fr. Mike

The Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God

Sunday, December 31

4:30PM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike

Monday, January 1

8:30AM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike

10:30AM ~ St. Mary - Fr. Mike



Fr Mike's Musings

For centuries the Jewish people have been awaiting a liberator, some leader from God who would fulfill their hopes and lead them back to a just and peaceful relationship with God and with one another. This anticipation was often a part of the religious and political language of the day. In the ancient world there was no concept of a separation of church and state. The people expected someone who would stand up against the Roman authorities and their collaborators, someone who would openly and violently resist the occupiers of Judea and the outlying Jewish provinces. This awaited person was often referred to as “Messiah” (the deliverer) or “Christ” (the anointed one). The Jewish prophecies did not anticipate that God Himself would take on this role to save all peoples, not just the Jews, from the wiles and evils of the world.

A great ongoing mystery about the Incarnation is about how God chose to enter into our historical dimension. He came into the world via a relatively small, and unnoticed people in a from backwater province in the Middle East. A Jewish child from the hill country of Galilee will be the instrument of God's message of Good News and salvation. Only our all-powerful God would dare to make Himself so vulnerable in what will prove to be an openly hostile environment to His message. To an extent that environment has not changed much since those days over two thousand years ago, except the antagonists are no longer Romans and Pharisees but us.

In our efforts to give honor to God and to enhance the experience of the Incarnation we sometimes adopt the questionable standards of the world. We labor to ensure that everything about the season is cute, colorful, and brightly lit. The trees go up on the day after Thanksgiving and come down the day after Christmas Day. Our radios and electronic devices are blaring out songs detailing the antics of Santa Claus with our mothers under the mistletoe, or Mariah Carey is assaulting our eardrums with her desire for a boyfriend for the holiday. Our celebration of Christmas, while pleasing to the eye, has become relatively antiseptic. Outside of our churches there is almost no mention of the reason for our gaiety for fear that someone, somewhere might be offended. We are having a birthday party but we have not invited the guest of honor—outwardly in our décor or inwardly in our hearts. Why? Why go through all of the expense and headaches to celebrate something that many are choosing to ignore in that same celebration? Very simply it is because we fear change and that is what is demanded of us by God, simple and unadorned change. This is what struck fear into the persecutors of Jesus' time, and it is something that troubles us today.

What we should remember is that Christmas is actually quite simple in its origins. God chose to empty Himself and become one of us. He came into human existence in a humble and wholly natural manner. He did not avoid our pains and discomforts throughout His life and ministry. Jesus took on flesh to do the will of the Father for our benefit. Like Him, we also are of the flesh and are called to the will of the Father for our benefit, our eternal salvation. This requires changes in life and attitude, major or minor depending on the person, but there must be change and that is undesirable for many of us. We want to have the party but do not want to know or acknowledge why we are celebrating—hence the real reason for sanitizing the season. We can try to have our cake and eat it too, but the cake is so much tastier is we know why it is there in the first place. If we greet and embrace the “birthday boy” who showers us freely with gifts. Health, hope, happiness, and the promise of eternal life in His Kingdom forever safe from the false promises of the world and from the dangers of our own selfishness. Only in Christ do we see that can have our cake and eat it too. Reason enough to celebrate, indeed.



Meal Train for Fr Mike

THANK YOU to everyone that has cooked a meal for Fr Mike. He has appreciated and has been enjoying his homecooked meals. Have you signed up yet? We are now scheduling for the new year. It really is as easy as making an extra serving of whatever you are preparing your family for dinner. Put it in a microwavable container and drop it off at the Parish Office on your way to (or home) from work.. Or call the office to make special drop off arrangements. (Sign up online: or call the parish office) <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/8vv97n>



St. Mary's Parish News

St Mary Religious Education

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW)

During 10:30AM Mass.

There is No Children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays, December 24 and 31.

CLW will resume on January 7, 2024.

Enjoy this special time with your family!

Religious Education Classes

1st-7th Grade

Wednesdays at Hall / 6:15- 7:30pm

8th Grade -Confirmation Classes

Wednesdays at Hall / 6:15- 7:30pm

Will be on Christmas/New Years break.

Classes will resume on January 10.

May the peace and joy of Christ be with you all on This special day and throughout the upcoming year. May God bless you and your family with a very Merry Christmas!

Questions or comments:

Please contact the Parish Office. 616.677.3934 or dre@saintmarys.marne.org



2023 Religious Education Christmas Program

On December 13 the Religious Education Catechist, students and their families celebrated the coming of Our Savior Jesus Christ with a short Christmas program and refreshments. Thank you to everyone who so generously donated money, time and talents to help make this year's Christmas celebration such a success! Thank you, may God bless you and your family this Christmas season!

Christmas Flowers in Honor of / In Memory Of

Mr. & Mrs. C. Aksamitowski
Allan Boomgaard
Floyd & Mary Bradley
Paul Brown
Joe Chesla
Helen Chesla
Tim & Luella DeBoer
Maria Loan Kim Do
Kathryn & Stephen Frantz
Joe Gavin
Arlyn Madura
Howard Dewayne Martin
Mr & Mrs J. Parris
Anthony Duc Sinh Pham
Josph Con Sinh Pham
Gordon Powers
Bonnie & George Schippers
Holly Farrell Szost



*Thank you for your donations.
(donations/names received as
of 12/12/2023)*

Knights of Columbus #11581 News

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A KNIGHT

We are Catholic men who lead, serve, protect and defend. We share a desire to be better husbands, fathers, sons, neighbors and role models and to put charity and community first.

To learn more about the Knights of Columbus' activities and what they do to support our parish community, the surrounding area and the world, please contact Grand Knight: Rob Rander at: robrander82@gmail.com or come to a General Membership Meeting. Meetings are held the 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00pm in St Mary's Parish Hall.

Next Meeting - January 4 at 7PM at the Parish Hall.

SAVE THE DATE! Breakfast & Blood Drive - Feb 4, 2024

Register : https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/156075

Knight Person of the Month for December - Bruce Kamp

Knight Family of the Month for December - Deacon Tom & Cindy Roberts

The Knight Person / Family of the month is a way of recognizing someone who has gone above and beyond, or done something extra for the council or our church community. Congratulations and Thank you for service and commitment to our Parish Family!



Merry Christmas

Wishing Our Saint Mary's Parish Friends and Family a very Merry Christmas!

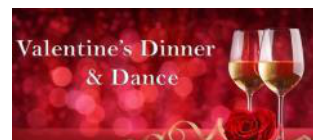
May it be filled with Peace, Joy and Blessings. From all of us on the Parish Staff: Fr Mike, Deacon Tom, Gary, Todd, Debbie, Jim, Marian, Cathie Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. 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

**The Parish Office will be Closed Dec 25 - Jan 2
For EMERGENCIES please call: 1.616.745.1409**



Save the Date - Feb 10, 2024

The St Mary Valentine Dinner and Dance is back... Watch the bulletin for more details and ticket information.



Giving Back to God ~ Time, Talent & Treasure

Unavailable at This Time

Loose Contributions

St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week

David Shabluk DDS & Marrielle May DDS

General Dentistry ~ 706 W. Randall St. ~ 616.837.6521

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BULLETIN!

Welcome to the Cluster Parishes of St. Mary and St. Michael

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

St. Michael's Parish News



Scrip News—Scrip totals will be updated next week.

St. Michael's Faith Formation

Children's Liturgy of the Word:

program is offered on Sunday during 8:30 Mass. Children 3-9 years old are welcome to join us each week as we pray, read and explore the Sunday Gospel from a child's viewpoint. We include the Gospel Acclamation so children understand the importance of preparing our mind and heart for the Gospel reading. **CLW is on Christmas break. We hope that all of you have a very blessed and joy-filled Christmas!**



Elementary Faith Formation: The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:15- 7:30 pm. **Elementary faith Formation is on Christmas break and will resume on January 10, 2024. Have a safe and blessed Christmas!**

Middle School Faith Formation: Grades 6, 7 and 8 will meet on Sundays after the 8:30 am Mass from 9:45 to 11:15 in the Youth Room. The 8th Grade students will also receive Confirmation Preparation. **Middle School Faith Formation will be on Christmas break and will resume on January 14, 2024 May you and your family experience the true meaning of Christmas and keep it with you throughout the New Year!**

CSA 2023 — Thank you for your gifts to 2023 Catholic Services Appeal! Your generous support funds essential diocesan ministries that strengthen us in Christ. Our parish goal for 2023 is \$59,280.00 and 100% participation, which means every parishioner should return their pledge card. To date, we have pledged \$43,685 (or 73.69%) toward our goal. We still have \$15,595.00 to go to reach this goal. If you haven't already contributed, please consider doing so before the end of the year. Please continue to pray for the success of this important effort.

For 2023 charitable deductions and tax credits, the IRS has ruled that charitable gifts are deductible only in the year the organization received the donation. To be considered a charitable donation for 2023, gifts must be dropped off at the parish office no later than Friday, December 29. Mailed contributions must have a Dec. 31, 2023 postmark.

St. Michael's Parish Family

Remembers in Their Prayers: Kevin Johnson, Anne Pols, Alexandria Gordon, George Langlois, Brooke Campbell, Linda Abel-Carroll, Jackie May, Brad Boerma, Dennis Goosen, Jean Mayse, Ken Heflin, Payton Patterson, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.



St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for Carl Goosen
by Marcy Goosen

Photo Directory — If you haven't already turned in your family photo for our directory, please do so ASAP. You may email a photo to: secretary@saintmichaels.us or call the office (616) 384.4026 to schedule a time to stop in and have a simple photo taken by Beki. It is not too late to take part, and we want all to be included!

Decorating for Christmas —

Due to Christmas Eve falling on the Fourth Sunday of Advent this year, we will be decorating the church for our Christmas Masses after the 8:30 AM Mass on Sunday, December 24. If you are able, please come to help out. There will be much to do in a short amount of time.



Giving Back to God

December 10, 2023

Adult Envelopes	\$3,707.00
Loose Cash	\$2,500.00
Children's Envelopes	\$1,000.00
Holy Day	\$822.00
Online Giving	\$1,120.00
Total	\$5,918.00
Building Assistance	\$75.00
CCFD	\$10.00
CCFD	\$40.00
Christmas Memorial Flowers	\$430.00
Retirement for Religious	\$925.00

Thank you for your continued support!

St. Michael's Preschool

Have you considered St. Michael's Preschool for your child or grandchild? If not, you should! Come see what a great experience St. Michael's Preschool can provide. Come meet our Director/Teacher, Cindy Lindberg! Preschool meets on MWF from 8:45—11:45 am. For more info, call the Parish Office at 616-384-4026.



December 24, 2023 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

An Invitation to Desire: Blessed Are Those Who Hunger for Holiness

Why was the angel sent from God to the virgin whose name was Mary? Why precisely to this girl among all the young women of Israel?

What “Sister said” to many of us in grade school (and what “Sister said” was the closest thing to working infallibility in the Catholic Church then, before or since!) was that God took flesh in Mary in answer to her desires.

Every girl in Israel, Sister said, dreamed of being the mother of the Messiah. But Mary wanted it most—most deeply, most passionately, with all her heart. So, God chose her (having chosen her from the beginning, knowing how she would respond) and fulfilled her aching desire.

And so he set the pattern for us all: What brings God to earth, what brings him to birth in a heart, is desire. Blessed are those who desire, for they shall be fulfilled.

Not every desire is fulfilled, because not every desire is for fulfillment. Not every desire is for that which can fill us “to the full.” That is why God does not satisfy every desire or answer every prayer. God sent Jesus that we might “have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). If we do not want life to the full, our desires lack power with God. God loves too passionately to be seduced by moderate desire.

Mary the virgin is the model of human desire. Her whole being opened itself to love without limits; her whole soul to surrender without reserve. That is why her being above all others proclaimed the greatness of the Lord and her soul exulted in his fulfillment of her. In the measure that she desired it was given to her: full measure, pressed down, overflowing, overwhelming, everlasting. She confronted love with longing, power with vulnerability, fullness with emptiness, possessiveness

DECEMBER 24, 2023

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-11, 16;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

with surrender, domination with abandonment, divinity with her humanity. If there was a contest, she won.

Because her desire was for more than this world can give, it was fulfilled by more than this world can accomplish: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the

child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.”

“Blessed are you among women. Blessed the fruit of your womb!”

This is the formula that brings salvation to the whole world—in all of its parts, in all of its nations, cultures, projects, undertakings and

activities. The formula that saves the world is passionate desire for that which fulfills all desire. The formula that destroys the world—in all of its parts, in all of its nations, cultures, projects, undertakings and activities—is desire that settles for less.

Behind every sin, behind every destructive thought, word or action, is infinite desire despairing of fulfillment. Desire that is focused on pleasure is desire despairing of joy. Desire that is focused on money is desire despairing of happiness. Desire that is focused on power or prestige is desire despairing of love. All desires that are focused on this world or on anything in it are desires despair-

*What brings God
to earth is desire*



ing of God. Any desire that narrows itself down to anything less than God is nothing but a masked despair of fulfillment. There is only one desire that has no trace of despair: "I know I am the servant of the Lord: let all be done to me according to his word!"

Fear is the mirror image of desire. What does the world, what do you, fear most at this moment? Is it loss of health or employment? Of relationship, of friends? Or the loss of fidelity to God? Is it the loss of something you desire? Or the loss of desire itself? "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

Fourth Week of Advent

Pray daily: Lord, my God, my being proclaims your infinite desire. My existence comes from your infinite desire to give yourself to me without limits. Let me feel the echo of this desire in my heart and love you without restraint.

Monday: Matthew 1:1-17. "So, all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations." Behind the world's history of initiatives, triumphs and defeats is the desire for fulfillment. Wisdom is the gift of appreciating what gives true fulfillment on earth. Do you long to learn from Jesus as the wisdom of God made flesh??

Tuesday: Matthew 1:18-24. "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife." Is your longing for a God who will intervene in your life, who will lead you and use you for his work, enough to overcome the awe and fear you feel at becoming involved with him?

Wednesday: Luke 1:5-25. The angel Gabriel said to Zechariah, "I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur." Do you long to nurture the seed of God's word through reflection and prayer so that you might

grow to knowledge and understanding and be able to speak his truth?

Thursday: Luke 1:26-38. "[Y]ou will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David." Do you long for a human race delivered from all that divides it into hostile fragments? How much do you desire all races and cultures to be united as a single family in Christ?

Friday: Luke 1:39-45. "For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy." Do you believe God's light and life dawned anew in you at your Baptism? Do you long to bring to others the saving presence of his truth, his love in you?

Saturday: Luke 1:46-56. "He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly." Do you believe that Jesus is overcoming the powerful of this world who put their personal good and the good of their particular countries over the good of the whole human race? Do you want to help him do this?

LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

As Christian: Put in a visible place something that reminds you of the Great Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart..." (Matthew 22:37). It might be just the word "all."

As Disciple: Each time you see or hear something designed to arouse desire in you (advertisements or commercials, for example), ask yourself how real, how total is fulfillment which the satisfaction of this desire can give.

As Prophet: This week, as a gesture (which needs be recognized only by yourself), give up something you have come to take for granted as necessary in your life.

As Priest: Each day this week make an act of deep adoration of God. You might kneel and kiss the floor each morning when you wake.

As King: Make a list of the priorities where you work, or in your family. What is the highest? Where is God?

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