

The Holy Family



Immaculate Conception
Parish, Monmouth
© Diocesan

St. Thomas Aquinas Church

5376 State Street • Saginaw, MI 48603
989-799-2460 • www.stasaginaw.org

Welcome Visitors & Friends

If you are worshipping with us for the first time or have visited before, We Welcome You! If you are looking for a church home in this community, we invite you to consider St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. Contact the Parish Office for more information on becoming a member.

Father Rick's Reflections . . .



"We are family. I've got all my sisters and me." I remember these lyrics from the song from Sister Sledge from 1978. Today, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family. Now, we may look at the images of the Holy Family and think they must be from another planet or be light years away from our present day. The gospel truth that God's word affirms today is that family is a *"kind of school of deeper humanity"* that is penetrated by the spirit of Christ. It is a challenge to live in mutual respect and love – for parents to honor the dignity of their children, and children to respect the dignity of their parents, each one bound to the other in the love that God has lavished upon us, as John writes in today's second reading.

Our understanding of what we usually call *"the finding in the temple"* has often been sabotaged by artistic depictions of a precocious child Jesus, haloed and white-clad, lecturing (and even berating!) the religious teachers. Yet if we are attentive to the text, Jesus is described as first listening to the temple teachers before asking questions at what was a customary festival and Sabbath question-and-answer session (as opposed to a

judicial one). *"Searching"* and *"finding"* are important gospel themes in Luke. They reflect the human experience that our questing so often involves questioning in the hope of finding something more – more love, more wisdom, more truth.

Any parent can appreciate Mary and Joseph's desperate search for and relief at finding Jesus, but there is another search, another finding that is of central importance. It hangs painfully on Jesus' response to his mother's question, *"Son, why have you done this to us?"* The first words of Jesus in Luke's gospel are his response: *"Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"* – the affairs that will take Jesus through a life of obedience, through another Passover of pain, another three-day loss in the tomb and into his new and risen life. The most significant developmental task of adolescence is the search for and gradual finding of one's identity. *"What defines one's identity – family ties, religious experience, a sense of vocation, a personal creed, or one's dreams and ideas? Jesus found his identity by affirming his relationship with God"* (R. Alan Culpepper, *Introduction to 'The New Interpreter's Bible'*)

After this, Jesus returns to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and is obedient to them. Luke tells us of Jesus' growth in human and divine wisdom after his presentation in the temple. The last verse of this temple incident with which Luke ends his narrative of Jesus' childhood is again a comment that it was in this human

family that such growth continued. An aspect of doing his Father's will was his openness to being graced by the precious relationships of his family at Nazareth. Children and parents in every age and culture are meant to be grace for one another.

Saturday, January 1, 2022, is the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary and New Year's Day. Since it falls on Saturday, we are dispensed from the obligation of attending Mass. We will not have Masses on New Year's Eve or New Year's morning. Sunday, January 2, 2022, is the Feast of the Epiphany. We will have our regular weekend Mass schedule – Saturday at 4:00 pm and Sunday at 8:30 am and 11:00 am. Please make note of the changes in the schedule.

In this time between Christmas and New Year's, much of the life of the parish quiets down. The parish offices will be closed on Monday and Friday this week. If you have business with the parish, please call ahead to make sure that someone will be in the office.

On behalf of Fr Kevin and myself, I want to thank everyone for their cards, gifts, goodies, and the like for Christmas. May God be generous to you as you continue in this holiday season. Blessed Christmas greetings to all



In Our Parish

Tuesday, December 28

8:30 AM Mass

Wednesday, December 29

NO Mass Funeral

Thursday, December 30

8:30 AM Mass

Saturday, January 1

Epiphany of the Lord

4:00 PM Mass

Sunday, January 2

Epiphany of the Lord

8:30 AM Mass

11:00 AM Mass

Private Prayer Time

The church is opened Monday thru Friday, 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM for private visits.



Scripture Readings

Readings for the Week of December 26, 2021

- Sunday** **Feast of the Holy Family**
1 Sm 1: 20-22. 24-28 or Sir 3: 2-6. 12-14, Ps 84: 2-3. 5-6. 9-10, 1 Jn 3: 1-2. 21-24 or Col 3: 12-21 or Col 3: 12-17, Lk 2: 41-52
- Monday** **Feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist**
1 Jn 1: 1-4, Ps 97: 1-2. 5-6. 11-12, Jn 20: 1a and 2-8
- Tuesday** **Feast of Holy Innocents, Martyrs**
1 Jn 1: 5-2: 2, Ps 124: 2-3. 4-5. 7b-8, Mt 2: 13-18
- Wednesday** **The Fifth Day in the Octave of Christmas**
1 Jn 2: 3-11, Ps 96: 1-2a. 2b-3. 5b-6, Lk 2: 22-35
- Thursday** **The Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas**
1 Jn 2: 12-17, Ps 96: 7-8a. 8b-9. 10, Lk 2: 36-40
- Friday** **The Seventh Day of the Octave of Christmas**
1 Jn 2: 18-21, Ps 96: 1-2. 11-12. 13, Jn 1: 1-18
- Saturday** **Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, The Mother of God**
Nm 6: 22-27, Ps 67: 2-3. 5. 6. 8 (2a), Gal 4: 4-7, Lk 2: 16-21
- Sunday** **The Epiphany of the Lord**
Is 60: 1-6, Ps 72: 1-2. 7-8. 10-11. 12-13, Eph 3: 2-3a. 5-6, Mt 2: 1-12

We welcome into the faith community through the waters of baptism **Sienna Elizabeth Herzler**, daughter of John & Kelly (Kretz) Herzler, **Warren Gerald Dean Kretz** and **Fallon Yavonne Kretz** children of Matthew & Brittany (Counts) Kretz and **Blake Isaiah Burnison**, son of Timothy Burnison and Brittany (Counts) Kretz.

May God bless them and their families as they become Disciples of Christ.



Prayers

Please pray for all who have been commended to our prayer that they will respond to God's healing will, especially:

Harold G.
Sylvia T.
Larry S.
Jim & Pat D.
Stephanie
Al V.
Deb P.

And those who are homebound and in assisted/nursing facilities.

We are happy to list names of those who request prayers for one month. The list will be purged again on January 28. Please remember to contact the office 799-2460 ext. 1 when a loved one's name no longer needs inclusion on the prayer list.



We are dispensed from the obligation of Mass for the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, Saturday, January 1.

No Mass

December 31 & January 1

Feast of the Epiphany
January 1 4:00 PM
January 2 8:30 & 11:00 AM



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be the children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

In and Around Our Parish

Thank You • 2022 Calendars

Our sincere gratitude to the Owners, Staff and families of Snow Funeral Home for the beautiful 2022 calendars. Thank you for this wonderful gift to our parish.

Parish Office Hours

The office will be CLOSED Monday, December 27, Friday, December 31, and Monday January 3. Should you have business between Christmas and New Years please call ahead to be sure someone is in. Happy Holidays.

Bible Sharing • Holiday Break

There will be NO Bible Sharing on Wednesday, December 29 and January 5, 2022. Please join us on January 12, 2022 at 10:00 AM in the Parish Office Meeting Room. Have a blessed Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Food Program Outreach • Brown Bag Bunch • January 1 & 2

Please take time to help the Brown Bag Bunch with any of the following needed items: **juice drink boxes/bags, packaged cookies**, peanut butter, sandwich and snack size zip-top bags, snacks, pretzels, individually wrapped snack cakes, strawberry and grape jelly/jam; and mayonnaise.

Monetary donations are gladly accepted. Please drop in the collection marked 'Brown Bag'.



Rejoice! The Word became flesh and dwells among us! Oh, come, let us adore Him!

December 11 & 12, 2021

Envelopes	\$16,714.00
Loose	\$705.00
Electronic (ACH)	\$838.00
Religious Retirement	\$4,953.00
Christmas	\$275.00
Christmas Flowers	\$722.00
Total	\$24,207.00

Our financial stewardship to St Thomas Aquinas for the weekends of December 19 & 26, 2021 and January 2, 2022 will be reported in the bulletin on January 9, 2022.

Please remember St. Thomas Aquinas in your estate planning.

Sponsor of the Week

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Welcome to Our Parish

If you are a visitor to St. Thomas Aquinas, we want you to know how welcome you are. If you wish to become a member of our parish, please call the parish office.

Parishioner Info: If you are moving, changing phone numbers or need to update family status, kindly notify the parish office.

Parish Staff

Pastor Fr. Richard Bokinskie
rickb@stasaginaw.org

Parochial Vicar Fr. Kevin Wojciechowski
kevinw@stasaginaw.org

Pastoral Associate Sr. Ann deGuise, OSF
annd@stasaginaw.org

Parish Secretary Dawn Drago
dawnd@stasaginaw.org

Bookkeeper Pat Messing
patm@stasaginaw.org

Baptism & Funeral Coordinator & RCIA Director Karen Bartels
starcia@stasaginaw.org

Music Accompanist Deborah Kraklow
debk@stasaginaw.org

Eucharistic Liturgies

Saturday 4:00 PM
Sunday 8:30 & 11:00AM
Tuesday - Thursday 8:30 AM
First Friday 8:30 AM
(In the event of a funeral on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or First Friday, morning Mass will be cancelled.)

Sacrament of Reconciliation

2nd & 4th Saturday 9:00-10:00 AM
(Or by Appointment)

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)

Anyone seeking information about the Catholic Faith should contact the parish office for more information. Sessions meet from September through Spring.

Baptisms

Baptisms will be scheduled after the required Baptism Preparation Class. Parents are required to be practicing Catholics and attending Mass regularly. Call the parish office to register.

Marriage

Individuals must be registered in the parish at least six months before scheduling a wedding. A wedding date can only be set after meeting with the parish priest.

Care of the Sick • Pastoral Visits

Please notify the parish office when seriously ill at home, in the hospital or a nursing/assisted facility. Also, If you or a loved one has had a hospital stay and are recovering at a rehab facility or moving into an assisted living facility and wish a pastoral visit.

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<https://stasaginaw.org/live-streamed-recorded-masses>

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FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



Help Us to Grow

Father,
through the holy family,
you have made all families holy.
You have given them as a model for us
as we walk through life together.
Help us to be ever more merciful.

Help us to forgive one another and
to do small things with great love.
Help us to grow together in holiness.
Give us the wisdom to imitate Mary,
holding all great mysteries in our hearts.
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 26, 2021 All Families Are Made Holy



Today's readings: Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14; Psalm 128: 1–2, 3, 4–5; Colossians 3:12–21 or 3:12–17; Luke 2:41–52 or 1 Samuel 1:20–22, 24–28; Psalm 84:2–3, 5–6, 9–10; 1 John 3:1–2, 21–24; Luke 2:41–52. Little is known about the life Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived in Nazareth. From the time they returned from Egypt until the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, the only story that appears in Scripture about the family is the founding of Jesus in the temple. A close reading of this text shows that they were observant Jews and they went to Jerusalem each year for Passover. It also can be seen that they traveled with their extended family, so they had other significant relationships in their lives. They had regular family struggles. Mary asks, "Why have you done this to us?" She sounds like many mothers who are

raising adolescents. Their family life is a model for ours, but it must have been very ordinary indeed.

Imagine what that can mean for us.

Jesus knows our hearts and our struggles because he lived them too. God entered into a family and set the family apart as a place of sanctification. The holy family makes all families holy. The family is an ordinary place filled with ordinary love, peace, mercy, justice, and forgiveness. It is a place to grow in holiness. This week, as you go about your routine, imagine how you are connected to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, across time and space, to their home in Nazareth. If you are preparing a meal or folding the laundry, you are doing holy work, just as they did.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 27

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of St. John, apostle and evangelist. He and his brother were early disciples of Jesus and witnesses to the resurrection. He traveled to Ephesus, where he composed his Gospel and letters, and later wrote the Book of Revelation from the island of Patmos. It is traditional to bless wine and cider on the Feast of St. John. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:1-4; Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; John 20:1a, 2-8.*

Tuesday, December 28

The Holy Innocents

When Herod massacred all baby boys under two years of age, he sought to eliminate the threat the messiah posed to his power. His horrific, violent act epitomizes a truth we know even today: those who benefit most from the world's brokenness and injustice will always oppose the transformation God has promised. The infant Jesus needed protection, protection God provided in the person of St. Joseph. The deaths of the children were profound violations of the law of God. God is the God of life. God raised the infants to be saints, that the profound injustice of their deaths might be transformed: from death to life, that is the way of our God. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:5-2:2; Psalm 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8; Matthew 2:13-18.*

Wednesday, December 29

Simeon: Waiting in Hope

God had promised Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the salvation of Israel. The child Jesus, not yet six weeks old, is brought to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord. What must it have been like for him to feel the fulfillment of the promise? What desires of your heart are you awaiting God to fulfill? *Today's readings: 1 John 2:3-11; Psalm 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6; Luke 2:22-35.*

Thursday, December 30

Anna the Prophetess

Anna the prophetess "spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Israel." The hope that she has held onto has been realized before her eyes, and she cannot keep it to herself. She goes out into the world to be the bringer of the Good News, to bring hope. When we celebrate Christmas, we are making present the incarnation through which God continues to bring about a renewed world. Christians are to testify about our hope, just as Anna did. How can you share your hope today? *Today's readings: 1 John 2:12-17; Psalm 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10; Luke 2:36-40.*

Friday, December 31

Word Made Flesh

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." The evangelist John tells us the cosmic significance of the birth of Jesus. Because John uses the language of philosophy and poetry, it can be hard to grasp what he means. But because he uses these elevated ways of speaking, it is possible to approach the inexplicable mystery that is contained in the incarnation. Read today's Gospel. What word or phrase sticks out to you most? Copy it and meditate on it as you pray this week. *Today's readings: 1 John 2:18-21; Psalm 96:1-2, 11-12, 13; John 1:1-18.*

Saturday, January 1

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

"Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." Mary's central place in this great mystery of God dwelling among us led her to a place of contemplation. Though she was the one chosen to bring Jesus into the world, she did not have all the answers. Praying the Rosary, we have the opportunity to contemplate like Mary, deepening our reflection while our words proclaim the memorized prayers. Pray the Rosary today and ask Mary to help you to hold all these things in your heart. *Today's readings: Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2:16-21.*



Readings for the Feast of the Holy Family

First Reading: 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28

Today's reading takes place 11 centuries before Christ at an Israelite shrine, which is referred to as a "temple" in the text. When Hannah visited this shrine previously, Eli the high priest had promised that she would bear a son. Today's reading picks up from there. (Christian have seen Hannah as a symbol of Mary.)

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24

Today's reading takes place 11 centuries before Christ at an Israelite shrine, which is rereferred to as a "temple" in the text. When Hannah visited this shrine previously

Gospel Reflection: Luke 2:41-52

The first letter of John was written for the community which produced the fourth Gospel. Today's passage reminds us about something that both John and Paul emphasized: Jesus has made it possible for us to be God's sons and daughters, members of God's own family.

For your reflection: How has the church, (the Word of God, community, Eucharist, etc.), helped you discover your true self?

Family Perspective-by Bud Ozar

Today's gospel contains this truth about parenting: "but his parents did not know." One of the reasons parenting is so difficult is because our children don't tell us everything. If the Holy Family had trouble with their teenager, why do we think it will be easier for us?

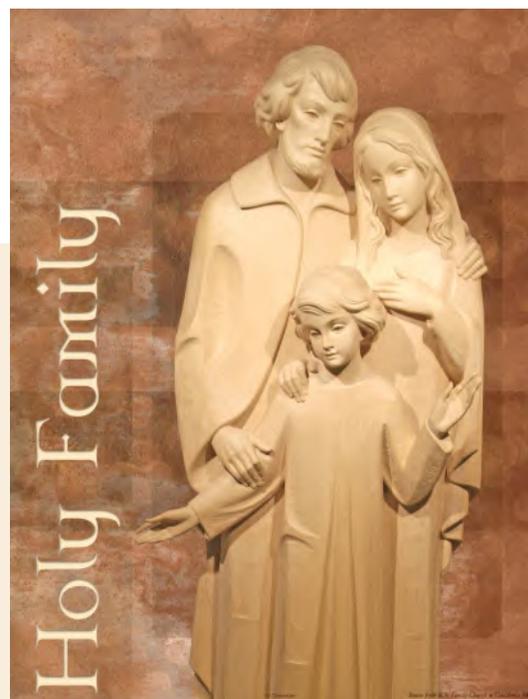
Stewardship Reflections

"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."
1 John 3:1

During this season of giving, let us remember a beautiful gift that we have received – being children of God! As God's children, it's in our DNA that we share and express our love for others as well. Tell your spouse, children, other family members and friends that you love them, every day! Also, pray for those people that are different than you, those that you may not like or those that go out of their way to annoy you. Your prayers may be the start of a new friendship.

What I Love About Being Catholic...

I loved that Catholic's know the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Having Mary, as my Mother, means a lot to me. Years ago, I loved May Crowning's and Processions. I desired to receive my First Communion by watching May Crowning's and believe God was with me after communion. . n. n.



Individual Rite of Reconciliation (aka "confessions")

9:00 – 10:00 AM

January 8 & 22

Updated COVID-19 guidelines: *NEW

Only one Church door will be open to enter and exit the narthex.

*While waiting to celebrate the sacrament, you may wait in the narthex practicing social distancing.

*The reconciliation room setup is in the nave of the church, to the left and right of the confessional rooms. There will be two priests available to celebrate the sacrament.

Each penitent will have the option to celebrate the sacrament either behind a screen or face-to-face, keeping 6 feet social distancing.

Once you have finished celebrating the sacrament, you must leave the church nave and narthex.

December 26, 2021

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Feast of the Holy Family

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 | Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 | Lk 2:41-52

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Some of my fondest childhood memories are of my dad leading my three sisters and me in song as we made the hour-long drive to visit my grandparents every other weekend. Granted, our silly car songs don't qualify as "singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," as Paul advised the Colossians, but I do think they reveal that my dad took to heart Paul's advice about family and faith. Paul writes that in putting on holiness, kindness, gentleness, and forgiving one another, we "put on love, that is, the bond of perfection." Whatever we do, in word or deed, we ought to do in the name of the Lord Jesus. Fathers, mothers, and children are to love one another, seeking and choosing the good for one another, and helping each other along life's journey - on long car trips as well as in a lifetime of situations. On this feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we honor their perfect holiness and love, and pray that God may continue to perfect us in holiness and love within our own families, that we may bear good fruit for the Kingdom.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Three Days? Mary and Joseph couldn't find Jesus for three days! Any parent who has had a child missing for a few seconds understands the anxiety Mary and Joseph experienced in three long days of searching for Jesus. In the end, though, all is well - they find him, and the peace of Christ casts out their fears. It is a remarkable scene: Jesus' parents are *astonished* to see him teaching in the temple, and Jesus is curious as to why they were looking for him - did they not know where he would be? This event marks a sort of milestone in their lives together, as Jesus has hinted at his future public ministry, and his parents have experienced that first bit of soul-piercing that Mary will later fully undergo. For each of them, love is what directed their actions. Joseph and Mary put aside everything to search for their son; Jesus put aside everything to serve his Father; and they joined together in humble obedience to God's will for them. The Holy Family models a way of living for us to imitate, and to witness to others in that imitation.

SERVE/STUDY Perhaps you have some down time in this coming week between Christmas and New Year's. As a family, choose an activity that allows you to think outside yourselves and serve others. Or make a plan to read the Scripture for each day of the upcoming week; everyone can choose a favorite verse to memorize each day. You may be surprised how often these verses enter your mind throughout the week.



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