

POPE FRANCIS MARY AND JOSEPH'S DREAMS



Dear brothers and dear sisters, our lives are very often not what we imagine them to be. Especially in loving and affectionate relationships, it is difficult to move from the logic of falling in love to the logic of a mature love. We need to move from infatuation to mature love. You newlyweds, think about this.

The first phase is always marked by a certain enchantment that makes us live immersed in the imaginary that is often

not based on reality and facts – the falling in love phase. But precisely when falling in love with its expectations seems to come to an end, that is where true love begins or true love enters in there.

In fact, to love is not the pretension that the other person, or life, should correspond to our imagination. Rather, it means to choose in full freedom to take responsibility for one's life as it comes. This is why Joseph gives us an important lesson. He chooses Mary with "his eyes open". We can say "with all the risks".

Think about this: in the Gospel of John, a reproof the doctors of the law make to Jesus is: "we are not children from that", referring to prostitution. They knew how Mary had remained pregnant and they wanted to throw dirt on Jesus' mamma. For me, this is the worst, the most demonic passage, in the Gospel.

And Joseph's risk gives us this lesson: to take life as it comes. Has God intervened there? I accept it. And Joseph does what the angel of the Lord had ordered: "He took his wife, but knew her not" – without living together she is expecting a son – "until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus" (Mt 1:24-25).

Christian engaged couples are called to witness to a love like this that has the courage to move from the logic of falling in love to that of mature love. This is a demanding choice that instead of imprisoning life, can fortify love so that it endures when faced with the trials of time.

A couple's love progresses in life and matures each day. The love during engagement is a bit – allow me to use the word – a bit romantic. You have all experienced this, but then mature love begins, love lived every day, from work, from the children that come... And sometimes that romanticism disappears a bit, right? But is that not love? Yes, but mature love. "But you know, Father, sometimes we fight..." This has been happening since the time of Adam and Eve until today, eh! That spouses

fight is our daily bread, eh! "But we shouldn't fight?" Yes, yes, you must. It happens. I am not saying you should, but it happens. "And, Father, sometimes we raise our voices..." It happens. "And there are even times when plates fly". It happens. But what can be done so that this does not damage the life of the marriage? Listen to me well: never finish the day end without making peace. "We fought. My God, I said bad words. I said awful things. But now, to finish the day, I must make peace". You know why? Because the cold war the next day is very dangerous. Don't let war begin the next day. For this reason, make peace before going to bed. "But, Father, you know, I don't know how to express myself to make peace after such an awful situation that we experienced". It's very easy. Do this (the Pope caresses his cheek) and peace is already made.

Remember this always. Remember always: never finish the day without making peace. And this will help you in your married life. To them and to all the married couples who are here. This movement from falling in love to mature love is a demanding choice, but we must choose that path.

This time too, let us conclude with a prayer to Saint Joseph.

Saint Joseph,

you who loved Mary with freedom,

and chose to renounce your fantasies to give way to reality, help each of us to allow ourselves to be surprised by God and to accept life not as something unforeseen from which to defend ourselves,

but as a mystery that hides the secret of true joy. Obtain joy and radicality for all engaged Christians, while always being aware

that only mercy and forgiveness make love possible. Amen. Thank you.

OUR DEARLY DEPARTED GRANT ETERNAL REST O LORD!



Helen Guth, 1931-2021, wife of the late Emerson, and mother of Susan, Carol, Thomas, Sheryl and Janice.

FROM FATHER ERIC CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thanks very much to all of you and to our friends in the community who have devoted over \$2,000,000 to our capital campaign. I had hoped that this would complete our campus renovation strategy but, alas, it won't and so fundraising must continue in other ways, shapes and forms.

We (Finance Council and School Leadership) had hoped to wrap things up

by Thanksgiving, that is, we had hoped to have an excess of 3.5 million by now, but that isn't in the cards. However, we will continue to seek pledges and support. For those of you who may be reluctant to support the project, please remember that we have brought the **Annual Diocesan Appeal** into this campaign. So, if you would like only to support the ADA as in years past, simply let us know and we will ensure that the diocese receives your contribution.

On January 6, our longtime architect and his team, and members of the Finance Council and the School Leadership Team will meet to discuss the scope of the project. Bless you all for your support. Onwards and upwards.

Our priorities remain the same, within the scope of the project we can afford: replace the front doors of church and sanctuary (altar) lighting, ensure the water tightness of the Lyceum, Lyceum security, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level III, and the new STREAM room (an advanced Tech room, with other purposes. STREAM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art and Math). Other "wants and needs" will have to wait.

By the time we finish with this project, we will have spent about 18 years tackling major projects: the Church, the School year by year and piece by piece, the blacktop and entrances and the grounds. While there are other things that still must be done since we did not raise the entire amount of 3.5 million sought, we must also now remain dedicated to maintenance and repair.

May you and your families and friends have a wonderful last week of Advent and Christmas celebration, and may the Savior's birthday and new year bring you continued health, despite the persistent pandemic, and prosperity!

The Lord's blessings be ever upon us.

Sincerely, Fr. Eric

CELEBRATING OUR FAITH

SACRAMENTS SCHEDULE

Mass Schedule

Incense is used at 9:30am Sunday Mass. Ministers have Glutenfree Hosts. 7:30 am Sunday Mass is Broadcast on Facebook at Epiphanyparish.com, with drive up Communion till 8:30am (Canopy). *Masks Required at 2 Masses.

Sunday, Dec. 19, Fourth Sunday of Advent

7:30am*	Alan Fogler
9:30am	Dina Vaughan
11:30am*	People of the Parish

Monday, Dec. 20, Late Advent Weekday

7:00am Barbara and Therasa Walljasper Lector: Kara Esker EME: Deb Willenborg

Tuesday, Dec. 21, Late Advent Weekday

7:00am Al Lopinot 8:15am Helen Dooley Douthit Lector: Kris Angles EME: Dorothy Meier

Wednesday, Dec. 22, Late Advent Weekday

7:00am Taimooraz Taimoorazy 8:15am Helen Dooley Douthit Lector: Chris Niebur EMEs: Lynda Arnold, Ed & Newze Nnakwe

Thursday, Dec. 23, Late Advent Weekday

7:0	0am	Tom Va	n Dev	'en	
8:1	5am	Nancy S	hevol	kas	
Lector:	Jennifer	Kamradt	EME:	Darly	Menke

Friday, Dec. 24, Late Advent Weekday

3:00pm	Bill and Ruth Harrington
4:30pm	Sgt. Joseph Ekstam
6:00pm	Kathy Ekstam
8:00pm	Enes and Fred Belligio
Midnight	Clara and Issa Benyamin

Saturday, Dec. 25, THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

9:30am Mary Lou Kownacki Risen Lector: Steve G. EME: Barb Burdett, Mary C. & Keith Walljasper

NO 4pm Vigil Mass TODAY

Sunday, Dec. 26, THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

7:30am*	David and Jane Hume
9:30am	Susan Lamb
11:30am*	People of the Parish

Confession Times

7:30am **M-F** 7am,3pm **SAT**

7am,9am,11am **SUN**

PARISH UPDATES

Epiphany Youth Ministry

High School Youth Group meets Sunday December 19 from 6:30-8pm in the new youth space (the old convent). Start your Christmas break with some COMMUNITY!

Alumni Night! Past and current members of High School Youth Group are invited to join us in the parish hall on Wednesday December 29th from 7-9pm for a Skittles Tournament and discussions on living your faith after high school!

Catholic Heart Work Camp is a weeklong summer mission trip for teens - you'll work tirelessly, think deeply, celebrate Mass, and build relationships. You'll dance, laugh till your side hurts, pray, change on the inside, and be part of transforming lives and communities for Christ! 8th graders and up are invited to join us in Memphis TN from June 12th-18th for Catholic Heart Work Camp. Contact Kara (kara.esker@epiphanyparish.com) for more info!

Junior High Youth Group is open to all 6-8th graders and meets once a month. Our next Junior High Youth Group is Friday, January 21st from 7-8:30pm. Come to the parish hall to hang out, have fun, and grow in faith together!

Adult Volunteers Needed! Our Youth Ministry Team is seeking to expand by one or two more adults who have a passion for helping form our youth and build them up to know and love God in the Catholic faith! Contact Kara



at kara.esker@epiphanyparish.com if you're interested!

School Custodian Needed!

Epiphany Catholic School is looking for a part time custodian to work during the school day. Responsibilities include cleaning, facility set-up, compliance checks, and maintenance of school buildings. Experience to include knowledge of maintenance/cleaning equipment as well as familiarity with basic landscaping and minor building repair practices, additional duties as directed. Applicants must complete all diocesan requirements. If interested in applying, please contact jennifer.kamradt@ epiphanyschools.org.

The Giving Tree

Because of the pandemic, we will be collecting monetary donations for PATH Crisis Center, Safe Harbor, Mid Central Community Action (Neville House), Birthright and Catholic Charities. You can contribute in two ways. 1) Go to Epiphanyparish.com and click on E-Giving. The Giving Tree is included in a drop down menu. OR, 2) Write a check to Epiphany Church and place "Giving Tree" in the memo line. The deadline for Giving

Tree contributions is December 6th. Please consider assisting those less fortunate.

Women's Bible Study

Start the New Year off right Join us for a new Walking with Purpose Bible Study: "Order Your Priorities: Building a Life Well Lived". Ordering Your Priorities: Building a Life Well Lived is an immensely practical Bible study that will help you put the most important things first. We'll begin by paying attention to the One who made us, because He can best tell us what we need for our lives to run well. Tuesdays, Jan 11-Feb 22, 2022, From 8:30-10:00am or 6:30-8:00pm. See registration details on the Events page at epiphanyparish.com

Starting a Small Group

Have you ever wanted to start a Small Group that studied something of interest to you? But you didn't know where to begin? Come to our Leader Formation Class Jan-February and learn all you need to

Cover: *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne*, 1510, Louvre, Paris, <u>before/</u><u>after</u> 2011 (controversial) restoration.

Leonardo's image won the critical acclaim of the Florentines; the monumental three -dimensional quality of the group and the calculated effects of dynamism and tension in the composition made it a model that inspired every artist. The composition is triangular, with Saint Ann as the summit. To the left, the Virgin is leaning towards the Child, himself preoccupied by the lamb, symbolizing the passion of Easter. Leonardo, as often, chooses an unusual image: Mary is sitting in her own mother's lap. What better way to describe the bond of maternal love uniting three generations? know to kick off a small group! Begins Sunday Jan. 9 from 7:30-9:00 pm in the Rectory Room, ends before Lent.

Come join us for The Search!

Missed a few episodes? Not to worry, they are easy to pick up even if you've never been! We've been having wonderful discussions about life's greater meaning and we'd love to include you! Coffee and cookies for all. Thursday December 30th is the next one in the Cenacle Room! stephanie.demboski@epiphanyparish.com

Carmelite Spirituality Group

Do you desire a community of likeminded people who will support each other in prayer as you live out the Carmelite Charism in the world? Then perhaps God may be calling you to become a Third Order Lay Carmelite. If you are 18 years or older, and a Catholic in good standing, you are invited to attend the Carmelite Spirituality Group. These meetings are the beginning stages, as we discern and move toward formation as a Third Order Lay Carmelite Community. The next "Carmelite Spirituality Group" will be held on Saturday, January 8th, at 10AM-12PM in the parish hall of Historic St. Patrick's Catholic Church, located at 1209 Locust St. in Bloomington, Illinois. Please contact / RSVP -Lorrie Schmidt T.O.C. (Third Order Carmelite) at: LittlewayofCarmel@gmail.com

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Funeral Committee Volunteers Needed

We want to resume funeral luncheons after January 1st, but we need YOU! Serving on the Funeral Committee is a concrete way to provide comfort to grieving families when a loved one is lost. There are a variety of ways you can help: donate desserts, set up the parish hall, help during lunch, or clean up. Committee members are not committed to help with every funeral lunch. To join the Funeral Committee, contact Suzanne Ferrara at sferra@ilstu.edu or join the Funeral Committee on Flocknote.

Join us at Midwest Food Bank

Epiphany Parish is sponsoring another volunteer service project at Midwest Food Bank on Thursday, January 13 from 6-8 PM. The Food Bank is located at 2031 Warehouse Road in Normal. We are looking for 25 volunteers from our parish to help sort and/or pack bulk food items, most of these volunteer roles do not involve heavy lifting. Volunteers must be age 10 or older. We ask that there be at least one adult to help supervise every three children. This is a fun opportunity to help feed the hungry, learn more about Midwest Food Bank, and meet your fellow parishioners. To sign up for this project, please go to: https://x.gldn.io/JqBpNU1xOjb or visit the website. If you have any questions you may contact Joe Morrow at 309-824-2193, or email Orlando Lopez at outreach@epiphanyparish.com.

Faith in Action News

Faith in Action is Charleston Bound this spring from April 3-9th! For all the details of this **bus trip**, visit https://bnfia.org/charleston-sc-bus-trip or call Jan at 309.827.7780. Book by Jan. 27, 2022! In addition, are you ready to brighten an older adult's day? With Faith in Action, **volunteer drivers**, shoppers and friendly visitors choose when and how often they volunteer. To register for Volunteer Orientation, email Stacey@bnfia.org or call (309) 827-7780. Upcoming dates: Jan. 4, 2022 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM, Feb. 1, 2022 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Saint Nicholas Bags

Are you looking for some way to serve the community while also having a young family? Sign up for a St. Nick's bag and provide the less fortunate with necessities like shampoo and toilet paper. Pick up and drop off one time a month at Epiphany! Contact stephanie.demboski@epiphanyparish.com for more info or to sign up!

PARISH CONTACTS

Parish Office

(309)452-2585 Epiphanyparish.com School Office (309)452-3268 Epiphanyschools.org

Fr. Eric Powell (Pastor) pastor@epiphanyparish.com 309-660-7860

Deacon Mark Cleary (Baptisms) mcleary08@comcas t.net 309-531-1062

Fr. Peter O. Okola, AJ (Vicar) t. Fr.Peter@epiphanyparish.com 703-626-8819

Kara Esker (Youth, CCD, Pastoral Team)) pastoralassistant@epiphanyparish.com

Stephanie Demboski Adult Faith Formation & Evangelization Coordinator stephanie.demboski@epiphanyparish.com

Domine King, Joyce Tellman (Office Staff) office@epiphanyparish.com; Angie O'Connor business.manager@epiphanyparish.com

Mike Essington (IT) it.director@epiphanyparish.com

Spiritual Directors:

Sylvia Hernandez sylviahernandez50@gmail.com Deacon Mark Cleary mcleary08@comcast.net

Parish Outreach

If you find yourself in serious economic need, Epiphany Parish and St. Vincent de Paul want to help. Email Orlando Lopez our Outreach coordinator: outreach@epiphanyparish.com.

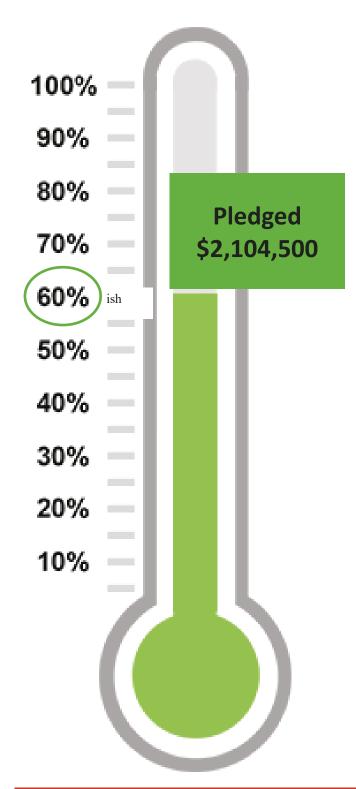
SHARING THE MISSION THANK YOU!

Gifts from Our Parish Family

December 12, 2021	\$12,417
E-giving	\$11,651
Special	\$1,276
Parish Endowment	\$535
School	
Endowment	\$130
Capital Improvement	\$611
Weekly Budget	\$24,500
YTD Budget (24 weeks)	\$588,000
YTD Income	\$559,247
YTD Balance	(\$28,753)

Pledges/Monies Received as of December 15, 2021

GOAL: \$3,500,000



Campaign Update

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RENDERINGS A1.2 09/27/21 Larson&DarbyGroup Activative Engineering Interior

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