

SAINT MARY

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

A Journey in Faith — To Love and Serve the Lord

FOUNDED 1890

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT • December 20, 2020

FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATOR

PROMISES, PROMISES! How often have we heard that remark when we learn of a promise being made? In the Readings for Today, we learn about God making promises, first to King David in the Old Testament and then to Mary in the beginning of the New. These promises when fulfilled, as they were, changed the world far beyond our understanding and yet, do you ever take the time to try to understand the significance of God's promises, these, and others?

THIS WEEKENDS GOSPEL PASSAGE is re-telling of the story of the Angel of the Lord promising Mary that if she agreed, she would become the Mother of the Savior of the World. We should be eternally grateful that Mary agreed. Who knows what would have happened if she had said "No!" Mary was the greatest "witness" and the first disciple of Jesus the Savior. From her earliest age, she was devoted to God and longed to be His servant. The promise made to Mary was the fulfillment of those made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the other great persons of the Old Testament and to all mankind in the New. (See Hebrews 6:9-19) Christmas is the fulfillment of the great promises of God, the beginning of our salvation. It is good to enjoy the traditional celebrations of the Christmas season; but take some time to be alone with Christ in Prayer, thanking Him for the many blessings He has bestowed on each of us through our families, our Church, and our very spirit. So, the question now becomes: What promises have **YOU** made that are yet to be fulfilled? Something to think about during your prayer time this week.

CSA 2020: As of now, we have received 432 pledges out of 2,550 families. I ask you, prayerful consider stepping in and contribute whatever you can to reach our target for CSA 2020. We still have a huge shortfall in order to reach our goal. Thank you for your generosity and continued support for our Parish community.

ON BEHALF OF OUR PARISH COMMUNITY, I would like to sincerely thank Valerie Fisher Thompson for her wonderful service for the past 20 years. She worked as a Pastoral Associate and Christian Service Coordinator for a long time and leaves behind a legacy as she prepares to retire on December 31, 2020. Let us wish her a well-deserved retirement and best wishes for her future. May God bless you and your loved ones.

With Every Blessing,

Fr. John Peter Arul MSFS.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

Christmas Masses will be celebrated December 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th.

Masses will be celebrated at the following times:

December 24th

4pm, 6pm, Midnight

December 25th

10am, 12 Noon

December 26th

5pm

December 27th

8am, 10am, 12 Noon

Please sign up for mass attendance at Eventbrite
[HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/O/ST-MARY-CATHOLIC-CHURCH-30368870362](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/st-mary-catholic-church-30368870362)



EXPOSITION, ADORATION AND BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

There will be **NO** adoration on December 25th. On January 1st which is the Solemnity of Mary, there **WILL** be adoration at 10:00am with benediction at 10:55 am followed by mass at 11:00am. Regular adoration will resume on January 8th.



SAINT MARY, OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS
 1955 E. Commerce, Milford, Michigan 48381

Pastor: Fr. John Peter Arul MSFS
 Fr.johnpeter@stmarymilfordmi.org

Assistant Pastor: Fr. Augustine Joseph MSFS
 Fr.augustine@stmarymilfordmi.org

Pastoral Assistant/Christian Service Coordinator:
 Valerie Thompson
 v.thompson@stmarymilfordmi.org
 Website: www.stmarymilfordmi.org
 Phone: 248-685-1482 FAX: 248-684-5642

PARISH OFFICES

Secretary: Cherie Makie
 parishoffice@stmarymilfordmi.org
Christian Service Assistant: Judy Vance
 j.vance@stmarymilfordmi.org

FAITH FORMATION OFFICES 248-685-2702

Director of Faith Formation: Colleen Gonzalez:
 c.gonzalez@stmarymilfordmi.org

Director of Adult Formation/RCIA: Anita Daroczy
 a.daroczy@stmarymilfordmi.org

Men's Ministry: Faith Formation
 faithformation@stmarymilfordmi.org

Director of Youth Ministry: Olivia Frailing
 youthministry@stmarymilfordmi.org

Faith Formation Admin Assistant: Wendi Burke
 faithformation@stmarymilfordmi.org

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Music Minister & Organist:
 Steve Hansen 734-730-7970

s.hansen@stmarymilfordmi.org
 Joe Hassell: Guitarist 810-623-4794

New Covenant Youth Ensemble
 Maureen Simms 248-684-5289
 maurtsimms@aol.com

PARISH COUNCIL

Council President: Larry Chludzinski
Council meeting is the fourth Tuesday of the month.

WORSHIP

Chairperson: Judy Ulbrich
Commission meeting is the second Tuesday of the month.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Chairperson: Jerri Somervell
Commission meeting is the second Tuesday of the month.

FAITH FORMATION

Chairperson: Mike Ciarelli
Commission meeting is the second Tuesday of the month.

FINANCE

Chairperson: Keith Hughes
Commission meeting is the third Tuesday of the month.

BAPTISMS Please call the Parish Office to arrange for your child's baptism.

MARRIAGES Arrangements may be made by contacting the Parish Office at least six months before the wedding date. You must also be a Parishioner six months previously.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Individual Confession on Saturdays between 9:00 & 9:30 am, Mondays 6:30-6:55 pm, Thursdays 8:30-8:55 am or anytime upon request by calling the Parish Office.

FAITH FORMATION



FOR ALL ADULTS, PARENTS AND CATECHISTS

These classes are offered for the entire congregation for personal enrichment as well as for Catechist Certification.

All classes will be presented on Thursdays 6:30 pm via Zoom

QUESTIONS? Deacon Tim Pilon
 at: deacontimpilon@yahoo.com



THEOLOGY SERIES: Thur. 1/7/2021

#14 THEOLOGY AS SACRED TRADITION

Sacred Tradition with Sacred Scripture as its core is the way the Church hands on the external mysteries of its faith about the Holy Trinity, Jesus, and the human person. Theology explores this Sacred Tradition in every age and culture, seeking to understand what we accept through faith. The objective of this session is to encourage participants to see the underlying unity of Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture and to understand that Sacred Scripture helps theology remain faithful to its task of presenting the Word of God anew for contemporary believers.

TO THE PEOPLE OF ST. MARY

After much prayer and discernment I have decided that as of January 4, 2021 I will be retiring from St. Mary.

Over the past 18+ years I have been on staff, I have been blessed and grateful for the many opportunities to share my faith with you.

Sometimes we don't get the chance to know what impact we have on others. This I do know though, that my life has been immensely enriched by being a part of your "family".

As we move toward our unknown future just remember always that Jesus will be the "lamp unto our feet", guiding us in the steps just ahead of us to keep us on the right path.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you all these years. Even though I am looking forward to the adventures ahead, I will miss being such an intimate part of St. Mary.

May you have a beautiful Christmas and may 2021 be filled with blessings of joy, good health, great family and friends.

With much love,
 Anita Daroczy

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Waiting

God of wisdom and strength,
we await you.

Like David, we await your prophetic guidance
and the peace you promise.

Like Mary, we await the liberation
of all people
and the fullness of your kingdom.
Do not keep us waiting.

Deliver us from hatred, ignorance,
and apathy.

Bring us your justice and your healing.
Give us your wisdom, compassion,
and courage.

Show us your light.

We await you, for you alone can save us.

Come quickly, Lord! Do not delay.

We await you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 20, 2020

Favored Ones



Today's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16; Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27, 29; Romans 16:25–27; Luke 1:26–38. God chose David, the youngest son in his family and a mere shepherd, to be king. David was a skilled and competent leader, but he was also devout. As he acknowledges all that God has done for him, he expresses his wish to do something for God, namely, to build God a temple. God replies that he needs no such favors from David. God then elevates the king still further by promising that David's descendants would rule over Israel forever.

Mary, an insignificant woman from a Galilean village, would never have imagined how much God would favor her. She does not think there is anything important she could do

for God, but the angel assures her that there is. Though startled and hesitant, Mary accepts God's will. She is ultimately elevated even above King David. She both bears God's Son and becomes part of the new era that this long-awaited descendant of David brings about.

We are God's favored ones, too. God strengthens us to live devoutly. He speaks to us in the law and the prophets and now also in the letters of the Apostles and in the Gospels. He sent his Son to reveal his extraordinary love. The love of God is a mystery that broadens and deepens the more we enter into it. We are surrounded and uplifted by this endless love. God invites us to bear that love in the world so that all will know his grace and favor.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

ST. MARY PARISH CHARITABLE OUTREACH

AS PART OF our vision as a Parish, we have sought to be a service both within and outside the Parish. Each month we distribute 6% of our weekly collections to various charities. Below is our Charitable Outreach for the month of November.

LOCAL - 70%

Community Sharing	\$ 1,000.00
St. Mary St. Vincent de Paul	\$ 1,270.54
Hospitality House	\$ 1,000.00
TOTAL	\$3,270.54

NATIONAL - 20%

Catholic Charities (Food in the USA)	\$ 933.44
TOTAL	\$ 933.44

INTERNATIONAL—10%

Catholic Relief Services (Hurricane Iota)	\$ 437.22
TOTAL	\$ 437.22



CHRISTMAS WAFERS

THE CHRISTMAS WAFER (Oplatek)

commemorates a custom many centuries old. It is a tradition among Polish, Slovak, and Lithuanian families, which has been adopted by many other ethnic groups.

THE TRADITION IS AS FOLLOWS:

AFTER GRACE IS said and before sitting down to the Christmas Eve (or Christmas Day) meal, all present share the wafer as a symbol of love, brotherhood, innocence, and Christ. The oldest person present breaks the wafer with the next oldest person exchanging wishes for health and happiness. Then the Oplatek is broken with others, beginning with the oldest child, also sharing wishes for happiness, health and good fortune. When the wafer is accepted, a willingness to forgive and forget is expressed; when it is offered to another, a willingness to share is denoted.

TO HELP CONTINUE this beautiful tradition of love and peace of the Christmas season, we make Christmas Wafers (Oplatek) available after all Masses.*

~ JV

**Sales are by donations*



HEALTH MINISTRY

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC can feel overwhelming due to new information, long work hours, and caring for your family and yourself. It's important to pause for a moment and collect your thoughts, as worldwide pandemics can be taxing. Remaining calm can help.

It is normal to feel stressed or overwhelmed during uncertain times. Emotions in response to uncertainty may include anxiety, fear, anger and sadness. You also could feel helpless, discouraged and, occasionally, out of control. Physical responses may include headache, muscle tension, fatigue and sleeplessness.

Taking care of yourself is important so you are equipped to help your family through this time.

Here are a few tips you can use to take care of yourself:

Physical health:

- Fuel your body by eating a healthy, well-balanced diet and drinking plenty of water.
- Aim to get seven to eight hours of sleep each night.
- Exercise every day.
- Take deep breaths and stretch often.
- Avoid risky or destructive behaviors, such as abusing alcohol or drugs, excessive gambling or ignoring public health recommendations.

Spend time outside, such as going for a walk in the park, but follow social distancing guidelines.

Mental health:

- Set and maintain a routine at home.
- Focus on things you can control.
- Use technology to maintain social connections with your loved ones. Consider a regular check-in schedule to give you something to look forward to.
- Focus your thoughts on the present and things to be grateful for today.
- Listen to music or read books.
- Consume reliable news sources that report facts, and avoid media that sensationalizes emotions. Limit your exposure or take a break from news and social media if you find that it makes you anxious.
- Lean on your personal beliefs and faith for support.
- Look for ways to help your community, such as blood donations, checking on older people in your neighborhood, or donating supplies or money to local organizations.
- Acknowledge and appreciate what others are doing to help you and your community.

KNIGHT NEWS



MY BROTHER KNIGHTS, in this season of Advent, there are not a lot of things we can do out of the house due to the weather. But we do still have spiritual opportunities. For instance, every Wednesday we get together on Zoom and pray the rosary. On select Thursdays we have access to the 'Into The Breach' series put on by Supreme. After we listen, we get together to discuss what we heard. On Friday afternoon we have Adoration services at St. Mary Church. All of these are great opportunities to become closer to God during Advent. This is the season of the coming of the Christ child. We should be ready to receive him and begin a new year.

FROM FULTON J. Sheen: 'May I, to the extent of my power, give all needful help to my friends and to all who are in want. May I never fail a friend in danger.'

Enjoy Sunday with your family

Gus LaRuffa - PGK (248) 912-7406
Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Council 7444



BLESSING TREE

This year, the trees in the church will be decorated with cards from our parishioners! Anyone who would like to take part just needs to mail us a Christmas card with a greeting. The cards will then be hung on the trees in the church. Please mail the cards to:
St. Mary Catholic Church
1955 E. Commerce St.
Milford, MI 48381
Please note on the envelope "Blessing Tree".

CHRISTMAS HAM ORDER PICKUP!

If you ordered ham or kielbasa don't forget that curbside pick up is **THIS Wednesday, December 23rd** between 1pm and 6pm. Just pull up at the second set of doors (by the maintenance office) in the back of the building. Someone will come out and get your name and bring your order to your vehicle. Please be sure to wear your mask!

THANK YOU!

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND BLESSINGS



THE SEASON IS the same, **THE REASON IS THE SAME**, only this year, our circumstances are very different from years past. Still, we are celebrating the Birth of Jesus, the Son of God, our Messiah, Savior and Prince of Peace. He brings to our hearts HIS HOPE, JOY, PEACE AND LOVE. We need to cherish these gifts in our hearts, never giving up on them and sharing them with everyone that we encounter. We continue to HOPE for an end to the pandemic, a cure and vaccine to eradicate it. Hope for the people afflicted with it in illness, death, and all whose businesses and livelihood have been lost by it. Protection for ALL who remain working for our needs. We need HIS GIFT OF LOVE to share with others who are in great need of help and support in these times. If we use HIS JOY to bring the good news and celebration of His Birth, perhaps we can lift up some downtrodden hearts. We must do our best to remain JOYFUL. Lastly, PEACE, probably is the most important and difficult in these unpeaceful times in our divided country. We pray for PEACE and a way to share it.

AS WE KNOW, the exact date of the birth of Jesus in not mentioned in the Gospels. The Church chose what was then the darkest day of the year (the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere), to emphasize that Christ, our True Light, came when humankind needed Him most. (Maryknoll Magazine) We have to keep HIS LIGHT shining in our hearts for others to see and HOPEFULLY to grasp onto. By now, possibly, we have prepared our hearts for the celebration of His Birth, decorated our homes with a Nativity Scene and other happy and memorable items, written Christmas cards with a loving note included, made phone calls to those who are alone, contributed to charities for the less fortunate and all the things we NORMALLY would do for this beautiful season. Family gatherings are important times. Pray for God the Father's advice on that one. After all we want to celebrate His Son's Birth in the best and safest way possible.

HAVE A BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Until next week.
Love & Prayers,
~Arlene Loehr.

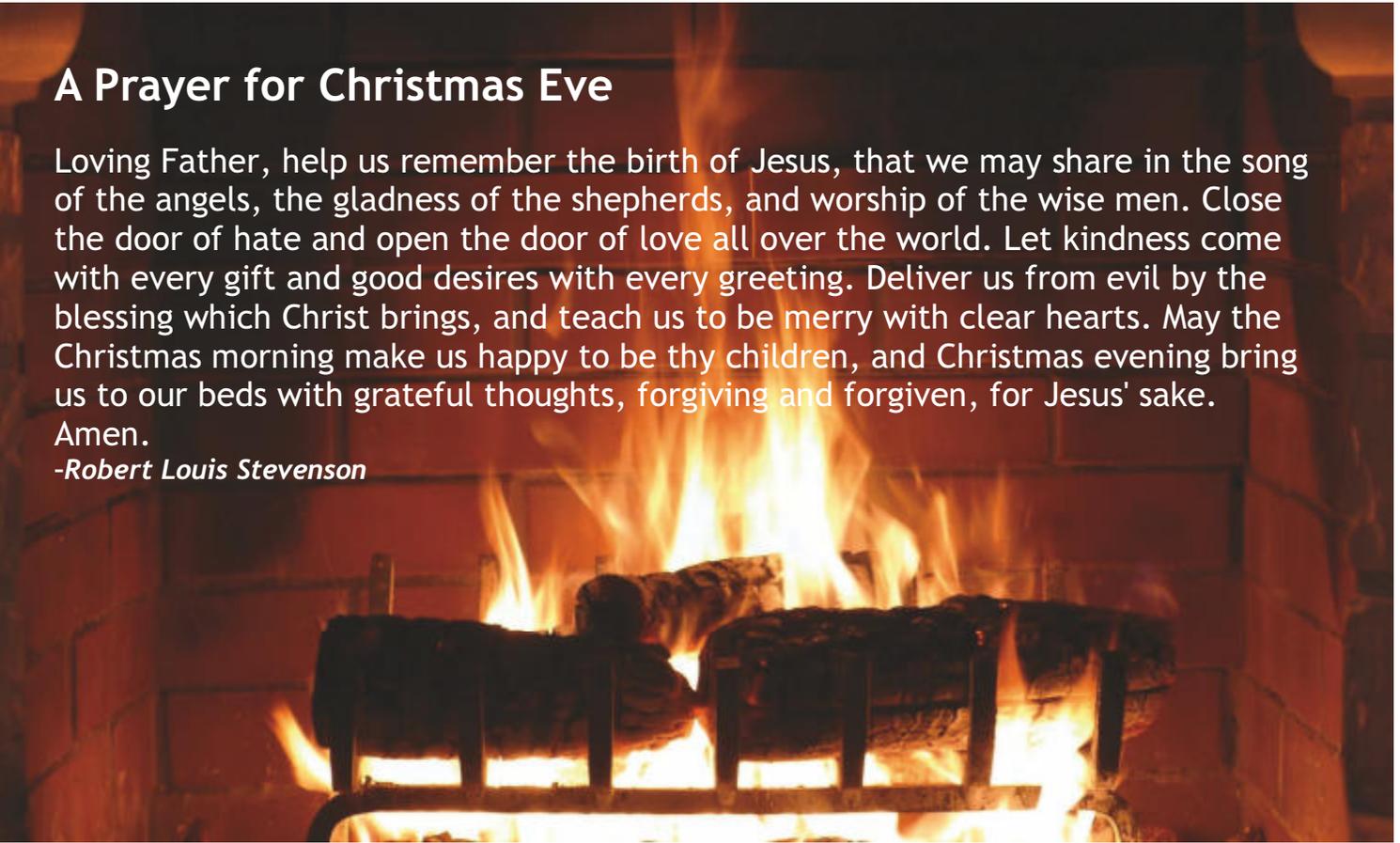
P.S. "JESUS, COME TO US, LEAD US TO YOUR LIGHT. JESUS BE WITH US, FOR WE NEED YOU."

A Prayer for Christmas Eve

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 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 thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

-Robert Louis Stevenson



STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS

The Journey

ADVENT COMES ALONG every year and will continue to do so until Jesus returns. As this season draws to a close, we can each ask ourselves, "Am I now any better a disciple of Jesus Christ and more of a steward of all my gifts than before the Advent season started?" I have been on this earth for 40+ years. I have had 40+ Advents to draw closer to God and to work on taking more seriously my baptismal call. Some have gone better than others, but I would like to think my spiritual life progressed at least a small amount during each of them.



CONVERSION IS A process. Stewardship is about a way of living and it is about more than simply being generous when a situation calls for it. Stewardship and conversion go hand-in-hand and we are always moving closer to holiness in Jesus Christ. Living in this way takes practice and commitment. If this Advent didn't go as you had hoped, remember is not really an end. It is just another step along your journey.

THIS CHRISTMAS, WHILE you are giving and receiving gifts and hopefully spending time with those you love, may you take the time to cherish the true gift that came to us over 2000 years ago and continues to call us to this day: Jesus. Let us be grateful beyond measure for this gift above all gifts, let us continue on our journey, and let our lives give testimony to the one who leads us.

– Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

ST. VINCENT DEPAUL

IMAGINE HOW MARY felt at the birth of Jesus: excited, awed, frightened. Deep faith was her light in the darkness, for Jesus was born during the night of the year when darkness is the longest.

Your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul brought light into the darkness surrounding the heart of those living in poverty bringing them the real, lasting, and deep joy of Christmas.

Please note that ALL MONIES donated to St. Mary St. Vincent de Paul remain in this area, and are used to assist local families in need.

IF YOU HAVE questions or are interested in joining us, please contact Julie Jacobs at (248) 396-2857.



PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL

Michelle Adams
Robert Andrzejewski
Brandy Asnaz
Arlene Banka
Laurel Bedgood
Anthony Beningo
Shirley Bible
Darryl Bolitho
Virginia Boomer
Carol Brown
Vince Brown
Tom Buckley
Dan Burke
Sarah Campione
Marguerite Carlise
John Carlton
Fran Cenzer
Terri Chiaz
Chuck Chidsey
Josie Ciaravino
John Clement
Trevor Cline
Bud Conrad
Richard Cole
Paul Corrin
Julien Couture
Simone Couture
Joe Criscuolo
Cliff & Mary Cunningham
Mary Jane DeCender
Russ DeLong
John Dickey
Jacob DiPonio
Tonya DiPonio
Dolores Donnellon
P.J. Driscoll
David Dunn
Dylan Drouillard
Morgan Elliot
Ivan Emiline
Alan Fergin
Mary Finnegan
Beverly Fleming
Thomas Fuja
Anthony Garofalo
Betty Gates
Natalina Gaviglio
Bev Golden
Jack Graver
Jamie Guckian
Eli Hansen
Helen Harcharick
Kathy Harcharick
George Hayden
Nancy Heinz
Dennis Henry
James Hanson
Ann Marie Howard
Virginia Iaconelli
Atlas Lee Jackson
Jackie Johnson
Joan Johnston
Kate Jostin
Patricia Kelly
Rob Kelly
Christopher Kirk
Jason Kirk
Ryan Kirk
Linda Kozlowski
Bruce Krot
Barb Kuehnl
Dorothy LaFave
Connie Lagodzinski
Becky Lamb
David Lashbrook
Lorraine Latour
Nancy Leanord
Ron Lemmon
David Liscinsky
Frannie Lesniak
Carol Malloy

Randy Manar
Cary Marakovitz
Tom Marciniak
Kelly Martin
Suzanne Marzek
Virginia Markey
Dr. Dunsten Mascarenhas
John Matusiak
Michael McCarthy
Sean McCusker
Marge McDiarmid
Michael McGregor
Debra McKinney
Kathy & Fred McMahon
Mary McNamara
Pete Mercer
Michael Misteravich
Adam Moore
Earl & Pat Moore
Charlotte Moss
Fr. Ed Mitchell
Joan Murphy
Joan Opiela
Mike Polcyn
Tim Pollard
Don Ponto
Karl Prescher
Susan Quade
Fran Rabideau
Michael Rahig
Cindy Rashid
Betty Redford
John Rogers
Marilyn Rogers
Henry Rossi
Sandy Roy
George Rusczyk
Claire Salyers
Eileen Sausa
Dave Scherf
Christopher Scherf
Lillian Schuller
Gloria Schulte
Jackie Schutz
Janet Sikora
Ken Sikorski
Edna Skop
Anne Sordyl
Graham Squires
Phil Stapleton
Kimi Stephens
Connie Stewart
Duane Stibal
Kristin Stoneback
Helen Swiacki
Lynn Tankersley
Shirley Teasdale
Bob Tomczyk
Hai Tran
Michael Trupiano
Chris Tucker
Diane Turcotte
Bill Tumidanski
Erin Van Gordon
Mark Vecellio
Sally Wagener
Matthew Wagner
Frank Walcheck
Damon Weaver
Justin Weaver
Nina White
William Wilkins
Ruth Wilson
Arlene Yearn
Diana Zerilli
Nicole Zapinski
Connie Zielinski
Laurie Zielinski
Paxton Zielinski
rev. 12-20-20



SAINT MARY PARISH

1955 E. Commerce, Milford, Michigan 48381
Website: stmarymilfordmi.org
Email: stmaryscatholicchurch@comcast.net
Phone: 248-685-1482

Weekend Masses

Saturday: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday : 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.,
12:00 noon

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Cancelled until further notice

Nursery

Closed until further notice

Weekday Masses

Monday: 7:00 p.m.
Tues., Wed., Thurs., Friday: 9:00 a.m.
Sat., 8:30 am

Holy Day Masses

9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

Monday, December 21st, 7:00pm

† Jennifer Sordyl, req. by: Mom & Dad

† Diane Henry, (1st anniversary) req. by: Family

Tuesday, December 22nd, 9:00 am

† Dolly Abel (6th anniversary), req. by: Her Family

† A needy soul in Purgatory, req. by: Marilyn J. Lesniak

Wednesday, December 23rd, 9:00am

† Jerry Chapple, (6th anniversary) req. by: Friends

† William Fisher, (15th anniversary) req. by: Family

Thursday, December 24th, **CHRISTMAS EVE**

(Church) 4:00 pm People of St. Mary (Fr. John Peter)

(Hall) 4:00 pm People of St. Mary (Fr. Augustine)

6:00 pm People of St. Mary (Fr. Augustine)

12:00 am People of St. Mary (Fr. John Peter)

Friday, December 25th, **CHRISTMAS DAY**

10:00 am People of St. Mary (Fr. Augustine)

12:00 pm People of St. Mary (Fr. John Peter)

Saturday, December 26th

8:30 am (presider) Fr. John Peter

† Don Bednard & Family, (1st anniversary) req. by: Family

† Antoinette Schaefer, req. by: The Siterlet Family

5:00 pm (presider) Fr. Augustine

† Kenneth Carey, req. by: His Sister & Nieces

† Charles Weaver, req. by: The Weaver Family

Sunday, December 27th, **HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH**

8:00 am (presider) Fr. John Peter

† Donna Trupiano, req. by: Tony & Joanne DiPonio

† Louis Margiotta, req. by: Tony & Joanne DiPonio

10:00 am (presider) Fr. John Peter

† Steve Loehr, (2nd anniversary) req. by: His Family

People of St. Mary

12:00 Noon (presider) Fr. Augustine

† Howard Rabideau, req. by: His Family

† A needy soul in Purgatory, req. by: Caleb Lesniak

**IN LOVING
REMEMBRANCE**

On behalf of the Parish Family of St. Mary, we would like to extend our deepest sympathies and prayerful reassurances to the family and friends of:

CARRIE KRUSHINSKI

Mother of Diane Bridgewater

JOE JAWARSKI

Brother in-law of Cheryl Kaczmarek

OFFERTORY REPORT

Thank you so much for your great generosity and open-hearted support of St. Mary.

Our annual budget is based on contributions each week of \$22,482.00 Due to early bulletin printing contributions are unavailable.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

All middle school girls are invited
to a bible study called

belong

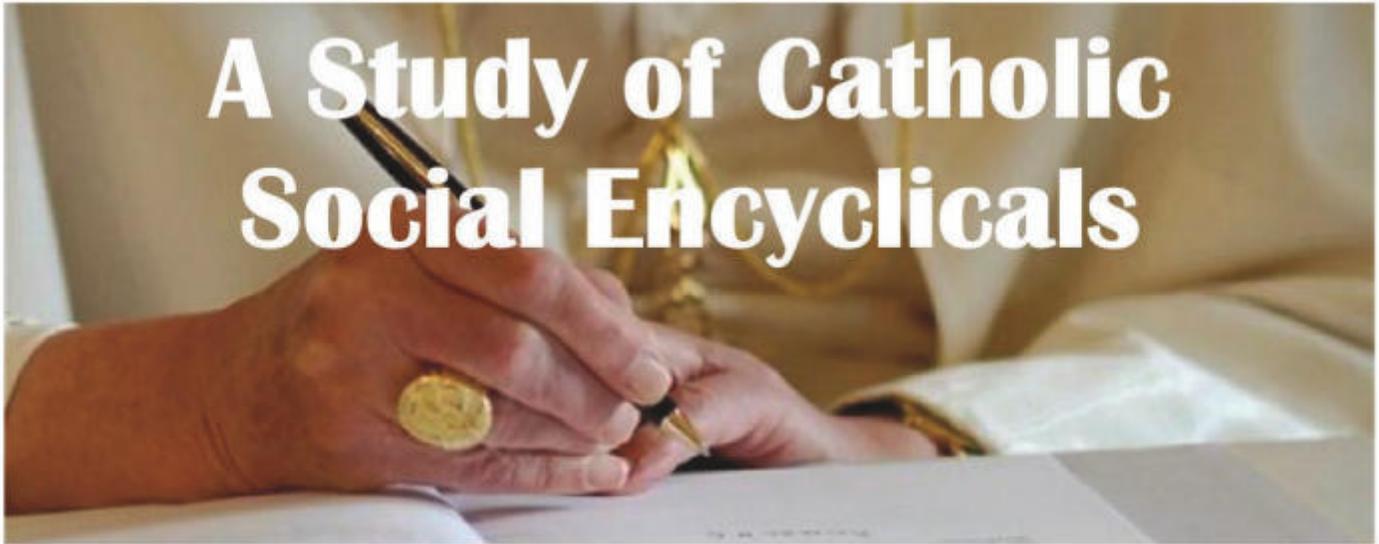
by Walking with Purpose.

Thursdays | 4:00 pm
Starting January 7th

In person or on Zoom, we will determine as a group depending on regulations at the time



A Study of Catholic Social Encyclicals



WHAT ARE THEY?

WHAT DO THEY MEAN FOR CATHOLICS?

WHAT SHOULD MY RESPONSE BE?

Social Encyclicals address the issues of the day. When the pope publishes an encyclical, it is a newsworthy event anticipated by both Catholics and many non-Catholics. Encyclicals can be controversial – both within the Church and in the outside world – but they are always relevant, thought-provoking and challenging.

For each of the letters discuss:

- * The main theme or issue
- * Historical context
- * How each encyclical applies to our own times
- * Call to Action—our response to each



STARTING JANUARY 14TH AND RUNNING THROUGH SPRING 2021 JOIN DEACON TIM PILON

along with other members of the parish as we explore the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church.

All Virtual learning Zoom Link ID for All Sessions - 618 350 8612

Respond to Deacon Tim Pilon at deacontimpilon@yahoo.com

Fourth Week of Advent

The whole purpose of these Advent pages has been to help us find intimacy with God in the midst of our everyday lives. So we have focused on using the background times of our days to create an interior atmosphere that allows us to wait, to hope, to come into contact with our longing and our desire.

The length of the Fourth Week of Advent depends on when Christmas Eve and Christmas fall in the week. Perhaps we can use these days to try to heighten our awareness of *whatever* is going on in our lives these days, and how that can bring us to Christmas. Some examples might help.

So many of us experience the ironic reality that Christmas can be the most lonely time of our lives. Some of these “mixed feelings” or “sad feelings” are difficult to recognize or name.

For some of us, the Christmas we will celebrate this year pales in comparison to wonderful Christmases of our past - perhaps because we were younger or more “innocent” then, perhaps because some of our loved ones who were central to our Christmas are no longer living or not where I am, perhaps because the burdens and struggles of my life or the changes in our world and the conflicts around us have robbed this Christmas of something that was there before.

For some of us, Christmas will be just another day. Unable to get out to go to church to be with a faith community, and without family or friends to be with, Christmas will be a day we are tempted to ignore.

For some of us, Christmas inevitably means family conflicts. Facing the days ahead, whether it be the last few remaining parties, or conflicting demands of family and friends, or the friend or relative who drinks too much, or the experience I'm having that I drink too much and this season is an easy excuse.

For some of us, Christmas challenges us with terrible financial burdens. Children today become victims of the gross commercial exploitation of the day. For those of us struggling to make ends meet on a day to day basis, feeling the cultural pressure of buying for our children things which we can't afford, can lead us to put more debt on the credit card in ways that simply push us further and further behind.

Some of us, might be really looking forward to Christmas, and not be aware of these struggles with Christmas, yet feel that, in spite of our best efforts to make Advent different this year, there is still something missing, and we still feel unready for Christmas.

For all of us, the story behind these days can draw us in, and invite us to bring our lives to the mystery of how Jesus came into this world and why. Our best preparation for the Holy Night ahead and the Joyful Morning to follow is for us to reflect upon how he came. He came in the midst of scandal and conflict. He came in poverty. He was rejected before he was born. He was born in a feed trough. He was hunted down. And he grew up in obscurity.

He did not shun our world and its poverty and conflict. He embraced it. And he desires to embrace us today, in this day. Right where we are. Right where we are feeling most distant. Right where we are feeling least “religious” or “ready.” If we let him come into our hearts to be our Savior these challenging days, we will find ourselves entering the sacred night and morning of Christmas “joyful and triumphant” as never before.

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



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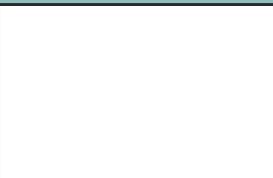
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