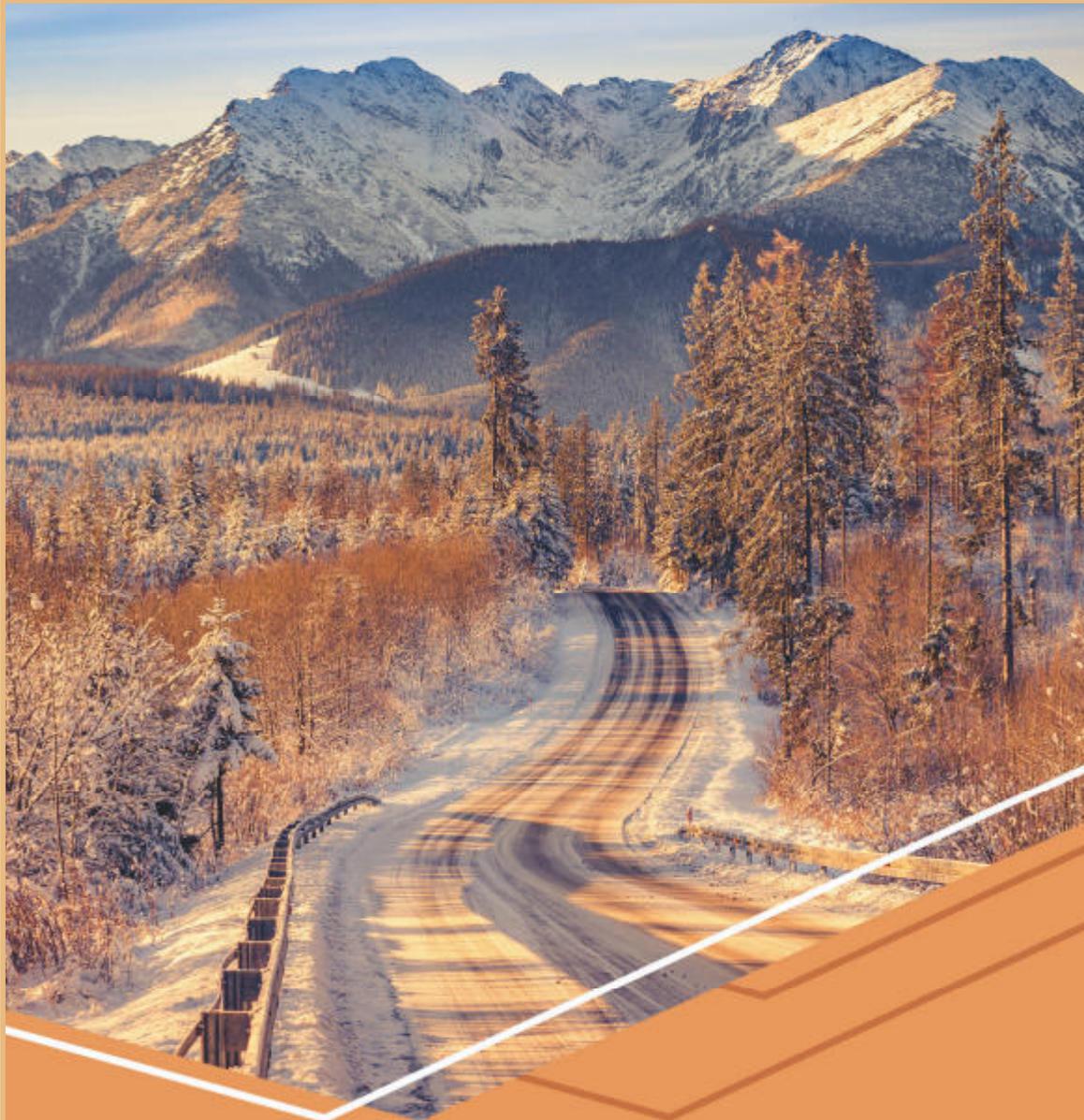


*Welcome to Blessed Sacrament Church
May all who enter as guests leave as friends*

1626 West 26th Street • Erie, PA 16508
814/454-0171 • www.bsparisherie.org
December 5, 2021



2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*"Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

- Lk 3:5-6

Blessed Sacrament Parish Mission Statement

To nourish our love of God through Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Centered in the Eucharist, we are developing a faith community through prayer, education, worship and Christian fellowship. As stewards of God's love, we strive to share our gifts and talents for the service of God and all His people.

PARISH DIRECTORY

Parish Office 814-454-0171
 Parish Office Hours:
 Monday—Friday 7:30am—3:30pm
 Closed for Lunch 12:00-12:30pm
 E-mail dfisher@bserie.org
 Website www.bsparisherie.org
 School 814-455-1387
 Cafeteria 814-455-7113
 Prayer Requests 860-6211
 Bulletin Deadline Monday at noon

Jason Bish jaybish80@gmail.com
 President of Ushers
Mary Jo Fulton mjfulton@roadrunner.com
 Chairperson of Pastoral Council
Carmen Phillips carmp2020@outlook.com
 Chairperson of Finance Council
Al Smith allen.smith@wabtec.com
 Knights of Columbus
Jim Theisen webmaster@bserie.org
 Webmaster for the parish www.bsparisherie.org
Melissa Baldwin mbaldwin@eriecatholic.org
 Webmaster for the school www.bsschoolerie.org
Michael Scalise twintek@velocity.net
 Parish Foodbank Coordinator

If child abuse is suspected call:
 PA Child Line: 1-800-932-0313

♯ HEARING DEVICES AVAILABLE
 & HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE

PASTORAL STAFF

Father Philip Pinczewski ~ Pastor
pastorphil@bserie.org
 Kevin Kunik ~ Permanent Deacon
kevinkunik@hotmail.com
 Jane Wagner ~ School Principal
jwagner@eriecatholic.org
 Jennifer Durney ~
 Facilitator of Religious Education
jdurney@bserie.org
 Kathy Golden ~ Director of Music
kgolden@bserie.org
 Joyce Wickles ~ Business Manager
jwickles@bserie.org
 Diane Fisher ~ Parish Secretary
dfisher@bserie.org



Like us on Facebook

CHURCH SANCTUARY CANDLE

The Church Sanctuary Candle will burn this week in loving memory of Stephen Gawronski from his wife and children.

SAINT JOSEPH ALTAR

The St. Joseph Candle will burn this week in loving memory of Margie Walkiewicz from her friends.

CHAPEL SANCTUARY CANDLE

The Chapel Sanctuary Candle will burn this week in loving memory of Emma Dioguardi from Jeannene Willow.

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

St. Nick's Day - The Christmas season is traditionally a "family focused" time and for many people that means focusing on children. For newly marrieds this might be a cozy time of couple bonding but for couples hoping for a child it can be a bittersweet time. Pray for those longing for children.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, December 11 @ 4:00pm

Lector: Lisa Dietrich

Eucharistic Ministers: Linda Koket, Lisa Schnars [S]

Altar Servers: Simon & Kate Kunik, Mia & Brianna Koket

SUNDAY, December 12 @ 8:30am

Lector: Barb Pronko

Eucharistic Ministers: Carol Delo, Mary Lou Peterson [S]

Altar Servers: Eliza Borezon, Isaac Spencer

SUNDAY, December 12 @ 11:00am

Lector: Casey Meyer

Eucharistic Minister: Ashley Lauria, Jan Tssario

Altar Servers: Ladule & Morbe Ladu



SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart, as though you have already come. I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. AMEN

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 6—St. Nicholas

8:00 +Doris Constantino / Kevin & Lisa Helsley

Tuesday, December 7—St. Ambrose

8:00 +Harry Gillespie / Family

Wednesday, December 8—Immaculate Conception

7:00 *Parishioners of Blessed Sacrament

9:00 +Doris Wisinski Baranello &

Helen Pacak Markowski / Wisinski Family

5:30 +Philip Pirrello / Children

Thursday, December 9—Advent Weekday

8:00 +Emma Dioguardi / Jeannene Willow

Friday, December 10—Advent Weekday

8:00 No Mass

Saturday, December 11—3rd Sunday of Advent

4:00 +Parishioners of Blessed Sacrament

Sunday, December 12—3rd Sunday of Advent

8:30 +Mary Del Porto / Lisa & Kevin Helsley

11:00 +Sadie Pirrello / Estate

7:30 +William & Rose Schriefer / Ron Schriefer

* Living

MASS SCHEDULE

Daily Mass in the Church at 8am Monday -Thursday

On the first Friday of the month...Mass at 8am

followed by Eucharistic Adoration 8:30-9:30am

Saturday Vigil: 4:00pm

*Sunday: 8:30am**, 11:00am and 7:30pm***

***these Masses will be livestreamed on our parish website & our Facebook page*

RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 3:00—3:45pm and by appointment

Unvaccinated people should wear a face mask.

Social distancing is encouraged

???QUESTION OF THE WEEK???

Question for Children: What things do you do to get ready for a big event or celebration?

Question for Youth: How do you share the Good News of Jesus with others?

Question for Adults: Name one thing you can do to help "prepare the way of the Lord?"

From Our Pastor

The Second Sunday of Advent introduces us to John the Baptist. His role is to clear the path make ready the way for Jesus. In today's first reading, a prophet invites a weary people to find strength in God's saving plan. The second reading, St. Paul prays that all believers may be pure and blameless before the Lord. And in the Gospel, John the Baptist prepares the way for the Messiah by proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of our sins. Let us ask ourselves this Sunday what gifts we see in others who prepared not only their own way to Jesus, but helped others meet Jesus and prepared the way for them. Jesus wants our engagement, our words and actions for the sake of other.

Thanks to all who have taken a tag from the Giving Tree. Our Food Pantry patrons as well as children from St. Martin Center will be able to have a brighter Christmas this year because of your generosity and kindness.

Thanks to all who participated in "I Give Catholic" campaign. As I write this I don't have any final figures but will report them next week.

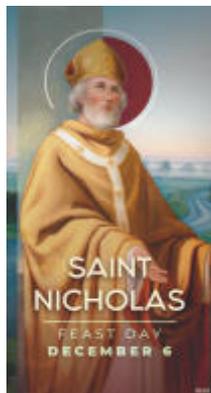
Last couple of weeks was a week of leaks! Jerry, our maintenance person, noticed water on the floor in one of our decoration storage rooms, behind the altar and above the sacristy. He called in McCreary Roofing and they were able to fix the roof leak. Another kind of leak I found was in the main confession room, which was a radiator leak. Jerry is able to fix that, but the carpet was sopping wet. Every year we have issues with our heating system. It is an old in ground, radiant heating system and many of the pipes have corroded over the years. Some pipes have been replaced, however lots of the system is shut down because of prior leaks. The church is heating well enough without these zones at this time.

This week is a Holy Day of Obligation. Mary, under the title of Immaculate Conception, is honored on December 8th. The Blessed Mother with this title is our nation's Patroness. Masses are at 7AM, 9:00AM and 5:30PM.

Blessed Sacrament will be participating in "**Light is On.**" Most all of the Churches in Erie County will be hearing confessions on December 15, beginning at 4:30pm and ending at 6:30pm. This will replace our communal penance service this year.

Included in today's bulletin is a second article on key terms for the 2023 Synod on Synodality. Pope Francis has asked all of us to contribute our insights to this synod, the theme of which is "*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.*" The diocesan phase is taking place this winter and spring. There are a total of four articles in the series. **A Diocesan microsite regarding the Synod has been launched, if you would like some additional information about the Synod. The site can be found at www.ErieRCD.org/synod.html.**

Peace,
Fr. Phil



***SAINT OF THE WEEK –
EXAMPLES OF OUR FAITH
St. Nicholas—Feast Day December 6***

St. Nicholas of Bari (March 15, 270 – December 6, 343), the bishop of Myra in the fourth century, is the saint that Santa Claus is modeled after. Known for his kindness and generosity to the poor, the story has it that St. Nicholas once tossed bags of gold through the open window of a poor man's house to help his daughters avoid a life of prostitution. According to legend, the gold landed in stockings dangling on the corners of the beds, which is why many of us celebrate St. Nicholas Day by hanging stockings and filling them with candy, fruit, and small toys. Not much else is known about this beloved saint, but regardless, his reputation as a generous man continues today. ©LPi

***Saint Nicholas is the Patron Saint
of the Erie Catholic School System.***

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOK

Pick up one of the little blue Advent books today as you leave church. The book is a six minute reflection each day for the next 43 days; the 23 days of Advent and the 20 days of the Christmas season. It can change your day...and maybe change your life.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS



If you wish to make a donation for the Christmas flowers in memory or honor of a loved one that will be listed in the Christmas bulletin, all envelopes must be received in the Parish Office **no later than Wednesday December 8th** due to bulletin deadlines. If you do online giving and want a special name listed please call Diane in the Parish Office.



**WHY DO WE DO THAT?
CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED**

Question:

With Christmas fast approaching, can you give me some practical tips to prepare myself and my family that will help us stay grounded in what this holiday is really about? With all the commercialism, it's easy to stray.

Answer:

Happy times and events bring fond memories and a renewed sense of love and kinship with others. The anticipation is half the joy of the event itself. The coming of the Lord is that kind of event that people have been looking forward to for generations with fervent hope and desire. It gave them strength and courage as they waited for the coming of the Lord. We know that Christmas is rushed. Sales begin in August and carols blare long before the season begins. Everyone laments the commercial aspects of the season, but as Advent begins, do something to help you be more mindful of the Lord's coming. Use an Advent wreath, or enthrone the Bible prominently, or read the readings from the Bible assigned to each day. Postpone the tree and decorations until closer to Christmas. Establish new family rituals, customs and prayers that help remind everyone that we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Fasting, daily Mass, a special celebration of reconciliation, reaching out to those alienated from family or society, and visiting the homebound manifest the love of the Christ Child and the Holy Family. Resist the temptation to rush the season. In his own time and in his own way, God will come. Our task is simply to be watchful and ready. ©LPi

CHRISTMAS WAFERS

We are happy to offer the traditional "Christmas Wafers" here at Blessed Sacrament again this year. They are now available in the Parish Office; each packet contains 3 white wafers and 1 pink wafer (for the family pets). We hope you will continue this tradition with your family or start this as a new tradition.



HOW TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH THE OPLATKI WAFERS

The Oplatki Christmas tradition, as it is commonly celebrated in the home, goes something like this: Just before the Christmas Eve meal the entire family will gather around the table with the Christmas wafer. Generally the eldest member of the family, usually the father or mother, will begin the ritual by breaking off a piece of the wafer and passing it to another family member while giving a blessing. This blessing can simply consist of what you desire for your loved one in the upcoming year - whether it be good health, growth in God's grace, or happiness. It can also be a request for forgiveness and a desire for reconciliation. The Christmas wafer is then passed from person to person around the table until all have had a piece and all have been given blessings. Each person then consumes their piece of the Oplatek in a special display of love and solidarity between the whole family.



OPEN THE DOOR FOR CHRIST

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

St. Ambrose shares some wisdom on our need to prepare the way and open the door for Christ. “You see that when the Word of God knocks hardest on your door, it is when his hair is wet with the dew of the night. In fact, he chooses to visit those who are in tribulation and trial, lest one of them be overwhelmed by distress. So, his head is covered with dew, with drops, when his body is laboring hard. It is important to keep watch so that when the Bridegroom comes, he is not shut out. If you are asleep and your heart is not keeping watch, he will go away without knocking; but if your heart is alert for his coming, he knocks and asks for the door to be opened to him.” When life gets overwhelming and difficult and we find ourselves feeling a bit downhearted and miserable, these words can bring great comfort.

We sometimes choose to remain stuck in our uncomfortable darkness and being stuck becomes our norm. In this time of self-focus our hearts are closed to the graces and life God desires to give us. Wrapped in the robe of mourning and misery, we fail to see the mercy, justice, and love the Bridegroom wants to bring. If we take seriously the need to prepare the way for Christ and open our hearts in preparation for his visit, we can hear God’s gentle voice calling us deep within. It beckons us to seek out its source and discover the inner calm and peace that can prevail over the darkness of despair. Sometimes our darkness is so dark that it may seem unsurmountable. Trusting in the spiritual friends who journey with us, and God’s promise may bring a glimmer of light even when it is most difficult to keep our hearts’ doors open. Sometimes, the only light in the darkness is found in trusting the faith of others both past and present.

We have to trust that God has already begun the accomplishment of good work in us and that humanity is on an incredible journey to something wonderful and awesome. God is not done. When we open the doors of our hearts, straighten the paths of our lives, and prepare the way, Jesus can come with God’s simple gifts of peace, grace, and joy. Life throws a great deal at us. It is easy to get tired and confused. We have to train our hearts to keep watch, discern what is of value, and forge ahead. Not allowing ourselves to become so weighed down by things and brought out of focus is a tremendous goal to achieve this Advent season. God is knocking. Answer the door. You will see and understand life in ways you never thought possible before. ©LPi

EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP - RECOGNIZE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS God’s Personal Assistants

If you have ever planned a large-scale event, whether it’s a musical performance or a religious conference, you may have dealt with someone’s personal assistant. Possibly this person would be a representative of the keynote speaker or the master of ceremonies for the local bishop; perhaps it’s even the staffer of a local politician or the lackey of a well-known musical act.

Personal assistants are masters of stewardship — overseeing things in their boss’ absence. They prepare the way. This person’s job is to get everything ready for the person in charge, so that when he or she shows up — whoever he or she is — it’s smooth sailing for them to do whatever it is they need to do: sing, speak, pray, mingle, what-have-you. It’s usually a big job full of little things, a gig where attention to detail is key.

God is the guest of honor in our life, the keynote speaker, the main event. And what He wants — what He needs — to do is to change our hearts. Constantly, over, and over, and over again.

We are all His personal assistants in this endeavor. We need to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight His paths. We need to make everything ready so that when He shows up — however He shows up, whether it’s in the form of a neighbor in need or a burning bush right in front of us — everything is ready for Him to do His job.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS ©LPi

Readings for the week of December 5, 2021

Sunday:	Bar 5:1-9/Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 [3]/Phil 1:4-6, 8-11/Lk 3:1-6
Monday:	Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14 [cf. Is 35:4f]/Lk 5:17-26
Tuesday:	Is 40:1-11/Ps 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13 [cf. Is 40:10ab]/Mt 18:12-14
Wednesday:	Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 [1]/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38
Thursday:	Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab [8]/Mt 11:11-15
Friday:	Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 [cf. Jn 8:12]/Mt 11:16-19
Saturday:	Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/Mt 17:9a, 10-13
Next Sunday:	Zep 3:14-18a/Is12:2-3, 4, 5-6 [6]/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18

CHILD PROTECTION AND CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS - THE DIGITAL WORLD

The digital world is constantly evolving with new social media platforms, apps, and devices, and children and teens are often the first to use them. Sometimes with negative impacts such as cyberbullying, sexting, or the posting hateful messages or content. Parents need to become aware and stay up-to-date on the latest apps, social media platforms and digital slang used by children and teens. Parents should monitor their child's social media sites, apps and browsing history regularly. Visit <https://www.eriercd.org/childprotection/> to see what the diocese is doing to help maintain safe environments for children and youth.

GETTING MARRIED (OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS)? Engaged couples are invited to attend an Engagement Encounter this January 28-30, 2022. Engagement Encounter is a restful retreat designed to provide engaged couples the tools for a happy, holy, and lasting marriage. Here's what folks have loved in the past: Time as a couple to focus on their relationship, a community that prays and has fun together, a non-judgmental atmosphere, the chance to set a good foundation for their marriage, and the opportunity to retreat from busy wedding details and enjoy each other. Learn more or register at <https://www.eriercd.org/familylifeoffice/ee.html>. We would love to welcome you this January!

Interested in being a substitute teacher?
Do You Have a 4 Year Degree?
 It's easy to get an emergency teaching certificate!

- ✓ Quick & easy process
- ✓ Offers great flexibility
- ✓ Perfect for parents & retirees

Find out more!




<https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/Pages/TIMS.aspx>

Blessed Sacrament School is Hiring



Blessed Sacrament School is searching for a middle school English Language Arts teacher.

We are also in need of a **before care worker** on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. We also need an **after care worker** on Fridays.

All interested candidates are asked to call the school at 814 455-1387 and speak to Principal Jane Wagner.

SAVE AROUND BOOKS

are full of hundreds of buy one get one free discounts along with many other great discounts. Stop in the Parish Office and check them out. The book is \$25 and pays for itself after using it a few times! Great Christmas gifts.




The 4th Graders at Blessed Sacrament School sponsored a school wide Gift Card Raffle as a service project to support Blessed Sacrament Food Bank and Second Harvest Food Bank. The gift cards were from local department stores, coffee shops and gaming activities. What a great way to be thankful for our many blessings and to share with others in the community.

**“LIGHT IS ON”
ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE**



The Penance Service will be held on **Wednesday, December 15 from 4:30-6:30 pm** This year many parishes in the Diocese will be open and have “their lights on” at that time for a penance service. **This will be the only Penance Service Blessed Sacrament will have.** We will still have our regular confessions on Saturdays from 3-3:45pm.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

We are in need of a few more Eucharistic Ministers to help distribute communion to the residents at Elmwood Gardens Nursing Home once a month after the 8:30am Mass. We would also like to have a few Eucharistic Ministers to take communion to our home bound on Sundays. If interested call Diane in the Parish Office.

EMAILS Fr. Phil's letters that you have been receiving have been sent out by email; if we don't have your email on file we will mail out your letter. If you do have an email and you are receiving his letter by mail, please provide us with your current email and help us save on postage. Thank you in advance for your help.



THE YEAR IN HONOR OF ST. JOSEPH

The Holy Father's Intention is that "every member of the faithful following Joseph's example may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will."

ST JOSEPH ALTAR

On our St. Joseph Altar is a basket for your prayer requests and a beautiful St. Joseph memorial candle. If you would like to have the candle as a memorial for a loved one, call or stop by the Parish Office and let us know which week you would like. Donations are \$10.

GIVING TREE



There are still a few tags still left on the Giving Tree in the lobby of church. Please help us make someone's Christmas a little brighter by helping out with this wonderful Blessed Sacrament tradition.

The STAR-SHAPED TAGS are for ST. MARTIN CENTER CHILDREN they are due back to the parish office IN GIFT BAGS BY MONDAY, DECEMBER 13.

The TREE-SHAPED TAGS are for our OWN GIVING TREE FAMILIES and are due back to the parish office UNWRAPPED BY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17TH.

If you have any questions, please email Jen Durney at jdurney@bserie.org.

THANK YOU Catholic Charities Counseling & Adoption Services would like to extend a big thank you to everyone who donated to the yearly Diaper Drive. Your generous donations of diapers, baby supplies and beautiful clothing are greatly appreciated and will help them to continue providing the services of counseling and material assistance to pregnant women and parents of young children.



31 CLUB Pray for Vocations

- December 06 Mary Lou Peterson
- December 07 Bob Fulton
- December 08 Richard Moore
- December 09 Carolyn Johnston
- December 10 Patty Palermo
- December 11 date available
- December 12 Mary Alice Haibach

Members of the 31 Club agree to go to daily Mass and /or offer prayers on a particular day every month for an increase of vocations to the Church. One of the best ways to increase vocations is through prayers, and the greatest prayer we have is the holy sacrifice of the Mass. *Please call the Parish Office if you want to be in the 31 Club and experience the satisfaction that comes from helping to fulfill a great need in the Church. We have openings on three different days, but you can pick your own date too!*

\$\$\$\$ RAISE THE ROOF LOTTERY \$\$\$\$\$

- 11/18 #989...#990...#988 no winners
- 11/19 #930...#931...#929 no winners
- 11/20 #414 no winner...#415 Jaime Hammond \$10... #413 no winner
- 11/21 #195...#196...#194 no winners
- 11/22 #739...#740 no winners...#738 Blessed Sacrament
- 11/23 #019...#020...#018 no winners
- 11/24 #208...#209...#207 no winners
- 11/25 #926...#927 no winners...#925 John Greiner \$10
- 11/26 #492...#493 no winners... #491 Bill Naguszewski \$10
- 11/27 #017...#018...#016 no winners
- 11/28 #219 Katie Petrarca \$100 ... #220 Dave Decker \$10... #218 no winner
- 11/29 #739...#740 no winners... #738 Blessed Sacrament \$10

DECEMBER TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE \$5 per ticket 93 chances to win this month

If you want tickets, call Diane in the Parish Office at 454-0171 or send an email dfisher@bserie.org and leave a message with your choice of numbers. We appreciate your support.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The Holy Day of Obligation will be celebrated on Wednesday, December 8th. Our Mass schedule is 7am, 9am & 5:30pm.

Mass Time	Eucharistic Ministers	Sacristan	Lector	Altar Servers
7:00am	Joe Scalise	Mary Lou Peterson	Rich Moore	n/a
9:00am	Teachers	n/a	Students	Rose Dana, Max Erven Ladule & Morbe Ladu
5:30pm	Jennifer Lydic	Denise Lif	Jim Ackman	n/a

Sunday, December 05, 2021
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

In praise of community service

Consider him an early volunteer. John the Baptist preached and baptized through the countryside, preparing the community for the way, truth, and life about to open to them. He wasn't paid for these services, which is probably why his diet was locusts and honey, and his clothing coarse. Today on International Volunteer Day, we give thanks for all who helped their neighbors with grocery runs and check-ins during the long season of sickness. We can continue this spirit of social engagement: giving blood, organizing group clean-ups, shoveling a neighbor's sidewalk. Volunteering builds empathy!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6 (6)*. "A voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.' "

Monday, December 06, 2021
MEMORIAL OF NICHOLAS, BISHOP

The wonder of it all

Very little is known about the historical Saint Nicholas, but he evolved into a legendary figure so intertwined with Christmas, it's almost as if he were part of the Nativity story. The actual Nicholas lived 300 years after the birth of Jesus. Whether he secretly gave gifts to children or not, the spirit of his story is real. Centuries later as presents are wrapped in mystery and kept under the tree in anticipation, emotions of waiting for the Christ Child heighten as we ponder a miracle we can't fathom. Thank you, Saint Nicholas, for a tradition that helps incarnate our joy and wonder!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26 (181)*. "We have seen incredible things today."

Tuesday, December 07, 2021
MEMORIAL OF AMBROSE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Wage peace

Advent anticipates the Prince of Peace. But as we recall Pearl Harbor, Catholics also embrace a tradition that includes just war theory—sketched out by the likes of Saint Augustine, fleshed out by the likes of Saint Ambrose. King David "never waged war unless he was driven to it," Ambrose observed, illustrating that wars should be fought only as a last resort. Further, war should be waged selflessly—to help and protect others. War that "preserves one's country [or] defends the weak . . . is full of justice." Pray for those in the armed services who sacrifice and protect, and also pray for peace.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 18:12-14 (182)*. "Comfort, give comfort to my people."

Wednesday, December 08, 2021
SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (PATRONAL FEAST DAY OF THE U.S.A.)

A day of pure celebration

Today we celebrate the Immaculate Conception, the church's teaching that Mary was preserved from original sin from the moment of her conception. It is one of only two dogmas proclaimed infallibly by a pope. All of today's readings are related: They trace the tale back to the Fall, followed by a celebration of the "marvelous deeds" of God's salvation, culminating in the gospel reading of the Annunciation, where Mary learns she will bear a son who will reverse the curse of sin. Today, honor our Blessed Mother and thank God for her preservation from sin so that she might bring Christ into the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (689)*. ". . . he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him."

Thursday, December 09, 2021
MEMORIAL OF JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATOATZIN

Be a witness to the miracle of God's love

We are told that Saint Juan Diego was undistinguished before he became the person to whom the Virgin Mary appeared at Tepeyac, Mexico in 1531. Juan Diego had an opportunity to open himself to God's grace—Mary's appearance and miracle. He responded in faith by listening to the Virgin and persistently communicating her message, even though as an indigenous person, his word was at first discounted. His part in the miracle at Tepeyac has had enduring impact by opening other indigenous and mestizo Mexicans to the gospel message, and by opening church leaders—albeit slowly, in fits and starts—to the message indigenous peoples have for the wider church. Are you ready to receive God's grace, as did Juan Diego?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15 (184)*. "Whoever has ears ought to hear."

Friday, December 10, 2021
MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF LORETO

Jesus makes his presence known

Emmanuel, "God is with us," is our guiding truth. Christians find many ways to remind ourselves of God's Real Presence. Of course, the primary way is through the Eucharist. But shrines and relics are also a very Catholic way of pointing to the reality of Christ in our lives. Take for example the shrine of Our Lady of Loreto, which resides in Loreto, Italy, a small town on the Adriatic coast. It is there that the original home of Mary is said to have been moved, either by angels or more probably by a wealthy Italian merchant, after the late 13th-century siege of Jerusalem. At this shrine we can presumably touch the same stones that Jesus touched as a boy. What a remarkable reminder that the Word was made flesh and lived among us. Pray to Our Lady of Loreto for continued reminders of God's abiding presence.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19 (185/689B)*. "The virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us!'"

Saturday, December 11, 2021
MEMORIAL OF DAMASUS I, POPE

By the book

By the fourth century of the Christian era there were 20 or so gospels floating around the early church communities along with the familiar four. Dozens of epistles existed in addition to the 21 we now recognize. It was today's saint, Pope Damasus I (c. 305–384), who presided over the Council of Rome in 382 that determined the canon, or official list, of the Bible. He also encouraged Saint Jerome to produce a translation of the existing Greek and Hebrew texts into Latin, the common language of the day. Inexpensive versions of the Catholic *New American Bible Revised Edition* make great Christmas gifts for friends and family looking to deepen their faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13 (186)*. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."



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 deepen and grow a day at a time.*

PARISH FAMILY

Pray for all those in our parish family who are hospitalized, ill, homebound and in nursing homes as well as those who care for them.

Pray for members of the military.

Pray for peace in our country and for God's protection and guidance over our country.

Pray for those who have suffered the experience of abuse, may they find through Christ's presence, deep healing and peace.



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The annual collection for our Retired Religious will be held in parishes on December 11th and 12th. This collection has significant benefits for the retired Sisters in our diocese, as well as for the over 30,000 retired religious throughout the country.

The **Retirement Fund for Religious** offers financial support for those Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests who worked for years for little or no stipends. Last year, the people in this diocese contributed more than \$150,000 to help defray the costs of medication, nursing care, medical equipment, transportation, physical and occupational therapy and other necessary needs.

The pandemic has been especially hard on communities of our elderly religious. All of our large convents in Erie have suffered through bouts of COVID with two Sisters dying of the illness. Strict COVID-19 protocols and visiting restrictions, along with additional costs, have taken an emotional toll of loneliness and isolation for our senior religious. Your generous gift provides vital support for their ongoing health care, helping them to age with dignity, in safety and comfort.

Senior Religious are a treasure of the Church. Some of you may not presently know consecrated men and women, but they have affected your lives through their ministry to your parents and grandparents and through the many organizations now in place due to their foresightedness and generosity. Their dedication and hard work laid the foundation for Catholic schools, religious education programs, hospitals, social service agencies and countless other ministries throughout our diocese; many still serve those in need, today. I join you in praising God for their faithful and generous service to the Church in the past and in the days and years to come.

I understand you are asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you only to be as generous as you can. Most importantly, please continue to pray for an increase of vocations to the consecrated life and for God's blessing on all our women and men religious. Know you remain in their prayers and in mine.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
+Lawrence T. Persico
 The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
 Bishop of Erie

SACRIFICIAL GIVING REPORT

	11/21/2021	11/28/2021
Adult Offering:	\$ 5,342.00	\$ 4,329.00
Loose:	\$ 621.00	\$ 511.00
Online:	\$ 1,114.00	\$ 1,496.00
All Saints:	\$ 10.00	\$ 5.00
Immaculate Conception:	\$ 5.00	\$ 15.00
Christmas Flowers:	\$ 135.00	\$ 1,120.00
Christmas:	\$ 60.00	\$ 40.00
Solemnity of Mary:	\$ n/a	\$ 15.00
Youth Offering:	\$ 31.00	\$ 81.00
Total:	\$ 7,318.00	\$ 7,612.00
School Support:	\$ 15.00	\$ 80.00
All Souls:	\$ 10.00	\$ 60.00
Food Bank:	\$ 100.00	\$ 25.00
Human Development:	\$ 678.00	\$ 60.00
Religious Retirement:	\$ 5.00	\$ 15.00

2021 CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL

Pledged to Date:	\$ 78,825.00	[238]
Paid To Date:	\$ 72,204.00	
Assessment:	\$ 71,158.00	
Unpaid Balance:	\$ 6,621.00	



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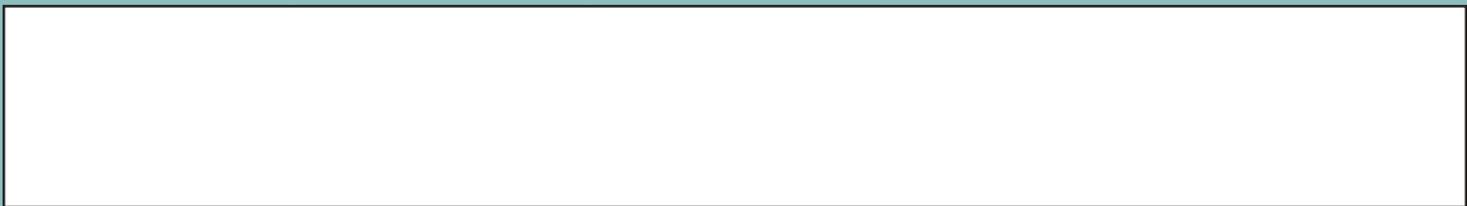
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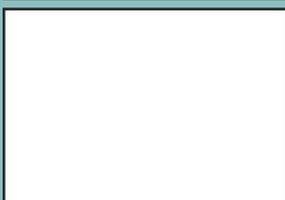


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