

The Heartbeat

March/April 2021

From the desk of Father Larry Tharp

Sacred Heart Church

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IS UNNATURAL ALWAYS WRONG?

Since Rene Descartes, secular philosophers have abandoned any concept of divinely inspired natural law. Contemporary ecological schools of thought, such as that which is evident in Pope Francis' "Laudate Si" and other "naturalist" or "holistic" (yes, this is the correct academic spelling) approaches would seem to be one of the last bastions of belief in "naturalism."

I have acquaintances on both sides of the issues. Some of my ecologist acquaintances say that any artificial or contrived manipulation of the natural material world is unnatural and therefore evil. I have often asked them regarding energy, "If science could find the secret of cold fusion, would you embrace it?" Most of this group of acquaintances have said, "No, because it is not natural." They explain, "I want to get back to nature!" I have other acquaintances (most of them with scientific backgrounds) of whom I have asked the same question. They respond, "Sure, cold fusion would represent a quantum leap in the development of humanity." In today's forum of public opinion, this question relates to naturalists who want only organic farming, versus long time family farmers who say that without GMO (genetically modified organism) seed, insects and other pests would destroy most of the crops.

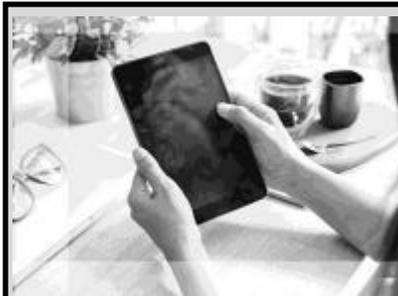
This discussion then begs the question: "Is it OK to manipulate nature, even the genetic code, unnaturally?" I submit for your consideration that the answer is not categorically "yes" or "no," but an ethically determined "sometimes." A moralist must ask the determining question; "What's the purpose." No, this does not mean the end justifies the means! From a traditional Catholic natural law perspective it would come down to, "Are we enhancing the ability of nature to function "naturally" or are we manipulating nature for ulterior motives and selfish purposes? If the former, we would be morally permitted to effect the manipulation of even the genetic code. If the latter, we are morally forbidden to manipulate the genetic code. Remember the three criteria for mortal sin. One, it has to be a serious matter. Two, you must have full knowledge that it is a serious matter. Three, you must intend to do it. An apt analogy might be the moral question: Is it wrong to swing a hammer? The answer is contingent upon whether you are using the hammer as a beneficial tool or as a lethal weapon. If we change the genetic code as in using a GMO seed, our intention is to protect the plant from insects and to enhance yield. If we modify a genetic code so that the recipient has the capacity to fight off a deadly disease, we have made a morally sound choice. If we do the same for selfish reasons it is wrong and perhaps immoral.

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All this relates to the question of whether an unnatural remedy can ever be moral? It seems clear that the answer (as stated above) is “sometimes.” Is Catholic Church going to change its teachings on artificial methods of birth control, in vitro fertilization, gender reassignment, or other moral teachings based in part or whole on natural law? Absolutely not! The Church is not going to adopt a utilitarian morality. Is the Church likely to condemn theoretical cold fusion as an energy source, if it were, in the future, ever to become a reality? I seriously doubt it!

So what does “sometimes” mean? God created nature. Before we can seek to enhance the good purposes or effects of nature, we must have compelling moral reasons. To do something just because we have acquired the intellectual capacity to do it is never a valid reason. To fail to use our intelligence to manipulate what God made (nature) for his good purposes, denies the divine origin of human intellect and the advancement of the human race. The moral question becomes, “Should we do what our intellect enables us to do?” In every equation there are variables and constants. The constant in every moral equation is God. A well-formed theocentric conscience is usually successful. A self-centered conscience never is!



Did you know that Fr. Tharp live-streams Mass each weekend? Masses are available each week on our YouTube channel. Please subscribe to our YouTube site for easy access:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVLLqbEY5hKWinwz069MVcg>

Office of Faith Formation

Submitted by Bryan Miller, DRE

What is Sin and What Do I Do About It? (Part 4)

An Examination of Conscience

In the last article of this series, we learned that through examining our conscience we can determine, with the Holy Spirit's help, whether or not we are living our lives in accordance with Christ's command to love. We have an example of an examination of conscience in a story related by St. Matthew in his Gospel (19:16-22). We will investigate this encounter of “the young man” with Jesus to better understand the elements of an examination of conscience.

There is a conversation between this young man and Jesus about how “to gain eternal life” (19:16). A young man approached Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” (19:16). This is the first step in any examination of conscience: approaching God and putting ourselves and our lives at his disposal by asking, “What good must I do?” Other ways of asking this same question could be, “What should my life consist of?” “With what should I occupy my time?” “What is most important in life?” “What should I do to please you?” “How should I live my life?” We should ask this in prayer with an open heart and listening ears, ready to hear the answer.

Jesus answered the man, “If you wish to enter into life, keep the Commandments.” Jesus pointed to Holy Scripture: the Commandments. In the previous article we read from the *Catechism* that “in the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path” (¶1785). We learn this from Christ himself in narratives like this one. Jesus points to the Word of God. This should encourage us to have a deep and profound knowledge of Scripture through prayerful reading and study.

We find a similar story in Luke's Gospel (10:25-28), where “a scholar of the law” asked Jesus almost the very same question, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (10:25). Jesus answers in the same way, pointing to the Law in the Old Testament Scriptures: “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” (10:26). Jesus continually referred people to the Scriptures – the writings that were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

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Office of Faith Formation

Bryan Miller, DRE

Marianne Fleckenstein, Secretary

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The young man in Matthew's story, when answered by Jesus that he should "keep the commandments," asked, "Which ones?" (19:18). This may seem like an odd question and we might expect Jesus to reply, "All of them, of course." However, Jesus does not reply in this way. He is specific in his answer to the young man. Of all the possible commandments in the Old Testament that Jesus could cite, he lists five of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20 and one commandment from Leviticus 19. This reminds us that the Law of God is much *broader* and *more comprehensive* than just the Ten Commandments. The "Law" refers to the first five books of Moses and there are many Commandments contained in them.

Jesus tells the young man, "You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother;" and 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Jesus only lists five of the Ten Commandments and sums up his answer to the young man with, "You shall love..." (Leviticus 19:18). In Galatians 5:14, St. Paul teaches us that "the whole Law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The young man considers Jesus's answer. This is the next part of an examination of conscience. First, we ask the question, "How should I live?" Once we receive the answer (contained in *Scripture*), we should spend considerable time contemplating and considering it. The young man said, after he had thought about it, "All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?" (19:20). He thought about the answer Jesus gave him (again, contained in the Scriptures) and compared it with his own lifestyle. We must do the same.

The young man said that he had kept all the Commandments Jesus listed, *but he still felt that he lacked something*. This is a very telling part of the story. Each of us is an individual. We have our own distinctive backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. When Jesus answers *us*, he considers this and speaks to us as unique individuals – an answer that takes our individuality into account. The young man himself, as he considered his life, is not satisfied with keeping the Commandments which Jesus listed. "What else do I lack?" he asked. He knew his own heart and his own life. He recognized, as he was honest with himself, and as he stood before the Son of God, that he *lacked something*.

Perhaps we might have answered Jesus, "Oh good! I've kept all those Commandments. I guess I'm ok!" And we could have left it at that. However, this is not really digging deep enough. We take an example from this young man who asked, "*What else do I lack?*," as if to say, "That's it? I've done all that and I still feel the conviction and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in my soul; I still feel there is something more for me to do. I feel that I *lack something*."

And then Jesus answered him in an *even more* specific and personal way. "If you wish to be *perfect...*" (19:21). Jesus recognizes that the young man needs a deeper answer, a more comprehensive answer, a more challenging goal. The young man feels a lack. Jesus goes a step further with the young man, and says, "If you would be *perfect...*" Jesus uses this word, "perfect," in one other place in Matthew's Gospel. "So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48).

When we go before the Lord in prayer and ask, "How should I live? Of what should my life consist? What would please you?" He will answer us. The young man *did not like* the answer that Jesus gave and "went away sad" (19:22). He wasn't satisfied with his life, but when he asked the Lord, "What further should I do?," the answer was *too challenging* for him.

When we examine our conscience, we're not trying to find an easy way out. After all, the price of our forgiveness was the death of Christ, and that certainly was not an easy way to obtain forgiveness for our sins. We're not trying to pull the wool over our own eyes and justify our behavior or our lifestyle. We're not trying to satisfy just the bare minimums of Catholic living. We're trying to go deeper than that. "What do I still lack?" the young man asked. Jesus answered, "If you wish to be *perfect...*" When we ask God what he requires from us, what he expects from us, we should not be surprised in the least that his answer will be challenging and all consuming. (This is, by the way, one reason why some people are afraid to ask the question.)

Jesus will always answer, "Follow me," as he said to the young man in Matthew's story (19:21). How *you* will be commanded to follow Christ is a tailor-made answer to *you*, as an individual. What we want to avoid is the response of the young man who "went away sad" (Matthew 19:22) and did not continue to follow Christ. We want to say "Yes" to what Jesus asks of us, even as Matthew, himself, did: "As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, 'Follow me.' *And he got up and followed him*" (Matthew 9:9).

"You have treated your servant well, according to your word, O Lord. Teach me wisdom and knowledge, for in your commandments I trust" (Ps. 119:65-66).

Office of Faith Formation
Bryan Miller, DRE
Marianne Fleckenstein, Secretary

March 2021

REP

We are still not sure how REP will work for the 2021-2022 year. I think we will have to wait for the vaccine to be disseminated and for results to come in regarding its effectiveness before we make a decision about next year's REP (whether it will be in class or remote again). We will send out emails about this as we get closer to the middle of Summer.

PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN FOR ADULTS WORKSHOP:

Sunday, March 7th

The VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children for adult's session is mandatory for anyone wishing to volunteer with children's programs in any parish/school in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Sessions at Sacred Heart are 6-10 PM in Fellowship Hall. Registration is limited to 20 people.

Please contact Marianne Fleckenstein BEFORE you register online. Paperwork must be filled out with Marianne to receive a Fastrax Token code that pays for the required online background check.

If you have any questions, please call Marianne Fleckenstein, the Safe Environment Coordinator for Sacred Heart at 858-4213. Her email is mfleck@sacredheart-fairfield.org

SACRAMENT INFORMATION

Congratulations to all of our Confirmandi who will be confirmed on March 3rd with Fr. Tharp. We look forward to you sharing your gifts of the Holy Spirit with us in ministry to the Church.

Our First Eucharist candidates are now in formation and need your prayers for their spiritual growth as they study to approach the Table of The Lord.



First Eucharist Students & Parents, March 22nd, Dry Mass with Fr. Tharp will be available on YouTube parish channel.

If you need a First Communion dress and veil or suit, we have beautiful lenders in a variety of sizes available in the Office of Faith Formation. Call Marianne 858-4213 to make an appointment to look the selection over.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Receive Plenary Indulgence during the Year of St. Joseph – Archbishop Schnurr has designated the following parishes to serve as temporary shrines during the Year of St. Joseph: St. Joseph, North Bend; St. Joseph, Dayton; and St. Joseph, Wapakoneta. A pious visit to one of these churches during this holy year is an occasion for receiving a plenary indulgence for those who recite an Our Father and the Creed, along with fulfillment of the other requirements for obtaining an indulgence (prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father, sacramental confession, and reception of Holy Communion). Please visit the parishes' websites to see church visiting hours and any possible devotional activities: www.stjosephnorthbend.com; www.stjosephdayton.org; www.petersburgparishes.org (Wapakoneta).

Office of Faith Formation Continued...

April 2021

April 4th Easter Sunday

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 11th

Wednesday, April 14th – First Eucharist Deadline

Please return completed workbook, finished banner and Mass choice.

April 25th World Day of Prayer for Vocations

VIRTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults

No session in April.



Sacred Heart School

Submitted by Joe Nagle

Hats off to our parishioners for their prayers. Moving through the pandemic has been a challenge in the face of our determination to provide a safe environment for our students and staff. At this writing on February 3, we have conducted in-person instruction all year except the week after Christmas when we went remote. Seven staff members have been diagnosed with COVID-19 so far this year along with nineteen students. We have had to quarantine over 400 students since late August, fortunately not all at once! The biggest number of them



was the first and second week of December when we had a total of 110 quarantined at one time. School and parish employees are scheduled to be vaccinated on February 4 and 25, affording a greater margin of safety. The biggest surprise to me in all this has been the ready compliance of our students, especially our youngest ones, with our masking requirement. It seems second nature to them. No worries. I ask for your continued support in prayer as we move forward.

- Joe Nagle, Principal

Women Together

Submitted by Marty Bruner

Women Together is a parish ministry for widowed, divorced and single women of Sacred Heart and St. Ann churches. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month, from September through May, in the Sacred Heart undercroft, Room 4 starting at 3:30 p.m. for a social gathering and then followed by the 4:00 p.m. meeting.

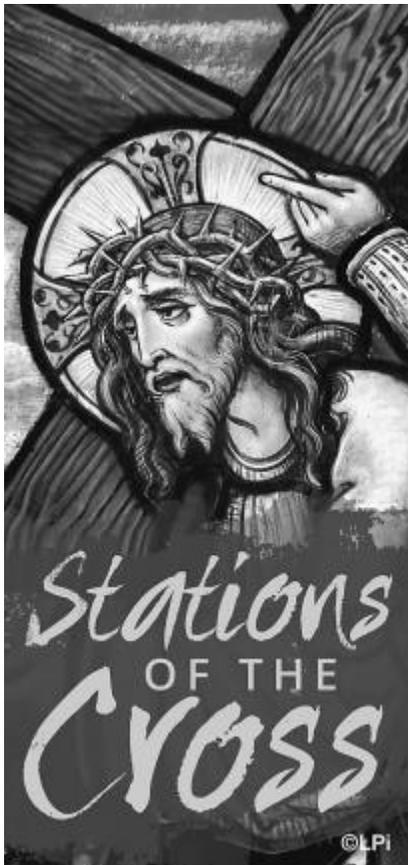
All of our meetings are postponed and hopefully will start up again in the upcoming new year.

We support our parish by volunteering for church activities and we offer opportunities to get involved in our community. We plan social activities and outings such as dining and plays.

We welcome anyone interested to meet our members, who not only participate in Women Together activities, but also volunteer in our community. For instance, The Fairfield Community Arts Center, Lane Library, Altrusa Hamilton Club, Fairfield Women Club, YWCA Women's Shelter and Mercy Hospital Auxiliary are some of our outlets.

Upcoming events: All of our events and activities have been postponed or cancelled due to the virus. Hopefully we will be able to plan some activities and events for the upcoming months of the 2021 year.

For more information about Women Together, please contact Marilyn Schlabach at 829-3697.



Stations of the Cross During Lent

Join us each week during Lent for Stations of the Cross. Fr. Tharp will have the Stations of the Cross at Sacred Heart on Sunday afternoons at 3:00 p.m. (excluding Palm Sunday) and at St. Ann on Friday evenings at 7:00 p.m. during Lent.

There will be no Lay Lead Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings at Sacred Heart this year.

Women of Faith

Submitted by Nancy Brunner

A new women's ministry, Women of Faith, has been created for our Pastoral Region! This ministry is to encourage all women to follow Mary's words, "Do whatever He tells you." and boldly live their faith in both word and deed. It hopes to provide opportunities for women to grow in God's love, follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit, minister to others and build community with one another along the way. Due to COVID restrictions, no activities or meeting dates have been planned. When things "open up" and plans are made, details will be announced.

**WOMEN
OF FAITH**



Knights of Columbus



FATHER ROETTELE COUNCIL 8115
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



Lenten Fish Fry's Cancelled for 2021 – There will be no Council 8115 Fish Fry's this year. We appreciate your support in the past and we will return next year in 2022.

Knights of Columbus Business Meetings Continue to be Held Virtually – Virtual Business Meetings are being held via use of Webex on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at our regular meeting time of 7:30 pm. To log in for the meeting, simply use the link found on the Council 8115 web page. Note that the Council 8115 web page link has changed this year and is now at:

<https://sites.google.com/view/KofC8115/>

Note due to WebEx limitations, the meetings must conclude within 50 minutes time frame, so we shall start promptly on time.

Helpers Needed for Disinfecting Church Surfaces after Sunday Masses – The K of C along with some other parishioner helpers continue to assist Father with disinfecting church surfaces (pews, etc.) following 8 am and 10 am Sunday Masses. Only 3 persons needed following both Masses. It only takes 10-15 minutes to wipe down the hard surfaces in the church. Disinfectant and cleaning materials are provided. If able to help, go to the link below using Signup Genius to volunteer. Will be seeking volunteers each Sunday until further notice.
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084eaea82aa4fc1-cleaning>

Connecting Corner

Submitted by Peace and Justice

Our Peace and Justice has chosen for our *Scripture focus for 2021* the story of Zacchaeus: “Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for *today* I must stay at your house.” Lk.19:2-5. In his 2020 book, Let Us Dream, Pope Francis chooses Zacchaeus to serve as an example of the isolation we may be feeling because of the pandemic. Zacchaeus renounces isolation, the cold loneliness where his isolated conscience had led him. By climbing that tree he opens himself to *community*, instead of a tax collector who is cut off and living off of his own people. Jesus responds immediately to his desire to change and calls him down from his self-sufficiency to join all of us who need each other. “*Now he is free to build a new future alongside others in the patient struggle that burns away all arrogance.*” P75. In this book Pope Francis asks us to ponder a path to a common better future. He notes this as our “time to choose”, asks each of us individually and as a community, how the pandemic has changed us...and how are we going to “act to restore the dignity of all peoples?”



Opportunities to connect with each other

March: Happy St. Joseph Day

- Please donate food and personal care items to the **HeartCart** to connect with our needy neighbors, March focus: : Personal Care items: toilet paper, deodorant. **Paper Palm Sunday, Mar 27/28**, is our annual weekend collection of toilet paper for our three partner pantries.
- Crsricebowl.org provides a Lenten calendar to help you stay in solidarity with the hungry around the world.
- The Catholic Rural Life Conferences and Anti-Racism Task Force of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Social Action Office invite you to learn about African American history in SW Ohio. Free zoom webinars are March 4 and March 11 @ 7:00 PM. To sign up for the first one in March, access: <https://resources.catholicaoc.org/event/a-lenten-journey-through-black-history-in-rural-ohio-session-2>
- St Patrick was kidnapped and sold into slavery at 16. What is known of his life echoes commitment to social justice. The Holy See designated a special “Year of Saint Joseph,” from Dec 8, 2020 to Dec 8, 2021. St. Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer and Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, Mary, pray for us.
- A Lenten opportunity to live in solidarity each other and our earth is available at LaudatoSiLent.org.

April: Happy Easter to You and Yours

- Please donate to the HeartCart in the Narthex: our April focus is canned vegetables, bar soap.
- We celebrate the Heart of the Good News April 4th, and pray that our caring community always be mindful of His Sacred Heart and ever faithful in our witness to His Resurrection.

“We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and (in) Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised (on) the third day and granted that he be visible not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.” Acts 10:34-37



-From Peace and Justice Commission

SHJ Golf Outing

Submitted by Matt Loeffler



The Sacred Heart Golf Outing this past Fall was so successful that we decided to host another golf outing this Spring! The outing will be at Fairfield's South Trace Golf Course on April 24th. Due to expected high demand, we have reserved the course the entire day to allow for two flights. To reserve your spot, please contact Craig Breetz at: c_breetz@yahoo.com. Don't delay as the Fall outing filled up quickly!

Parish Festival

Submitted by Matt Loeffler

Planning for the **2021 PARISH FESTIVAL** has begun. The planning committee meets monthly on the 3rd Monday starting in February. Make sure to update your calendar with the festival dates - **August 13-15, 2021**. If you would like to volunteer, sponsor, or ask a question, please send an email to:

sacredheartfestivalvolunteers@gmail.com.

We are very excited to see everyone again this year!

*- Zak Zoz and Matt Loeffler
Festival co-chairs*

Mark your Calendars!

Sacred Heart

Summer Festival 2021 is

August 13, 14 & 15



March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7:30am Mass 7:30pm St. Vincent de Paul (RH2&3)	2 7:30am Mass 7:30pm Parish Council	3 7:30am Mass 7pm Confirmation (CH)	4 7:30 Mass 9:30am Small Faith Group (RH1) 7pm Choir (CH)	5 7am Mass 12pm Eucharistic Adoration	6 8am Mass 8:30am Confession 4pm Mass
7 8am, 10am, 12pm Mass 3pm Stations of the Cross (CH) 6pm VIRTUS (FH)	8 7:30am Mass 8pm Pre Baptism Class (RH2&3)	9 7:30am Mass	10 7:30am Mass 7pm RCIA/RCIC (RH2&3)	11 7:30 Mass 9:30am Small Faith Group (RH1) 7pm Choir (CH)	12 7am Mass 12pm Eucharistic Adoration	13 8am Mass 8:30am Confession 4pm Mass
14 8am, 10am, 12pm Mass 1:30pm Baptisms (CH) 3pm Stations of the Cross (CH)	15 7:30am Mass 7pm Festival Committee (RH4) 7:30pm St. Vincent de Paul (RH2&3)	16 7:30am Mass	17 7:30am Mass 7pm RCIA/RCIC (RH2&3)	18 7:30 Mass 9:30am Small Faith Group (RH1) 7pm Choir (CH)	19 7am Mass 12pm Eucharistic Adoration	20 8am Mass 8:30am Confession 4pm Mass
21 8am, 10am, 12pm Mass 3pm Stations of the Cross (CH)	22 7:30am Mass	23 7:30am Mass	24 7:30am Mass	25 7:30 Mass 9:30am Small Faith Group (RH1) 7pm Choir (CH)	26 7am Mass 12pm Eucharistic Adoration	27 8am Mass 8:30am Confession 4pm Mass
28 8am, 10am, 12pm Mass 1:30pm Baptisms (CH)	29 7:30am Mass 7:30pm St. Vincent de Paul (RH2&3)	30 7:30am Mass	31 7:30am Mass	Calendars are subject to change based on current regulations from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the State of Ohio.		

UC- Undercroft
 CR- Conference Room
 FH - Fellowship Hall
 UR- Stage/Upper Room
 CAF- Cafeteria
 SCHOOL- Entire school
 CH- Church
 HOSP- Hospitality Room in the Undercroft
 RH 1, 2, 3, 4- Rooms in Undercroft

NOTES:

April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Calendars are subject to change based on current regulations from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the State of Ohio.</p>				<p>1 Parish Office Closed</p> <p>7:30pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper</p>	<p>2 Parish Office Closed</p> <p>12pm Stations of the Cross (CH) 1pm Traditional Good Friday Service (CH) 8:30pm RCIA Practice (CH)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>8:45pm Easter Vigil</p>
<p>4 8am, 10am, 12pm Easter Masses</p>	<p>5 7:30am Mass</p> <p>7:30pm St. Vincent de Paul (RH2&3)</p>	<p>6 7:30am Mass</p> <p>7:30pm Parish Council</p>	<p>7 7:30am Mass</p> <p>7pm RCIA/RCIC (RH2&3)</p>	<p>8 7:30 Mass 9:30am Small Faith Group (RH1)</p> <p>7pm Choir (CH)</p>	<p>9 7am Mass</p> <p>12pm Eucharistic Adoration</p>	<p>10 8am Mass 8:30am Confession</p> <p>4pm Mass</p>
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NOTES:

Sacred Heart of
Jesus Church
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Palm Sunday

4:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday

8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m. Masses on Sunday

Monday - Wednesday

7:30 a.m. Mass

Holy Thursday

7:30 p.m. Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday

12:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

1:00 p.m. Traditional Good Friday Service

Holy Saturday

8:45 p.m. Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday

8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m. Easter Masses