



Founded in 1788

ST. MARY *of*  
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

127 N. Monroe St., Monroe, MI 48162 734-241-1644

THE CHRONICLE



December 27, 2020  
Feast of the Holy Family

Vision Statement: To Welcome. To Inspire. To Transform. To Serve.



# THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

All things came to be through him,  
and without him nothing came to be.  
What came to be through him was life,  
and this life was the light of the human race.

- Jn 1:3-4

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, a Catholic community of faith, proclaims Jesus Christ through prayer, worship, celebration of the sacraments, ongoing care for those in need, lifelong faith formation and stewardship of our time, talents and treasures.

## DIRECTORY

**CONTACT US AT 734-241-1644**

### PASTOR

Rev. David Burgard

### ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Rev. Giancarlo Ghezzi

### IN RESIDENCE

Rev. Bob Singelyn

### DEACONS

**Dcn.** Mike Stewart  
dcnmike@stmarymonroe.org

**Dcn.** Zaid Chabaan  
dcnzaid@gmail.com

**Dcn.** Michael Ingels Deacon Emeritus

### PASTORAL MINISTER AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Lorie Bronson  
734-241-6088  
lorieb@stmarymonroe.org

### DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

Leslee Smith  
734-241-6097  
faithformation@stmarymonroe.org

### MCES

Kyle Kubik, Executive Principal  
734-241-3923

### MUSIC DIRECTOR & ORGANIST

John Raymond  
734-242-6253

### FINANCE DIRECTOR

Julie Dull  
734-241-8910

### CYO SPORTS

### PARISH OFFICE MANAGER

Cathy Rogers  
parishoffice@stmarymonroe.org

### PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

**Roger Kidd, Chair** (at large)  
**Elliot Alfredson, Vice Chair** (at large)  
**Hugh Acosta** (Stewardship)  
**Donna Banker** (Recording Sec)  
**Sal Benisatto** (at large)  
**Fred Fedorowicz** (Christian Service)  
**Al Gallan** (at large)  
**David Heilman** (at large)  
**Rick Kidd** (at large)  
**Gus Martyres** (at large)  
**Bob McMillan** (at large)

## HOW TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS



Please contact the parish office or Fr. David with inquiries about the Sacraments at:

734-241-1644 or

parishoffice@stmarymonroe.org

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION/ CONFESSIONS

Saturday, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Reconciliation room is in the left sacristy door behind the altar. The sacrament is available upon request from one of the priests.

*In addition to regular confession times, arrangements can be made by calling the parish office.*

### MARRIAGE

At least one individual must be a member of St. Mary Church. A minimum of six months previous notice is required before the wedding date. Please phone the parish office for more information.

### THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

Anyone interested in inquiring about our faith, or anyone interested in becoming a Roman Catholic Christian please contact the parish office.

### BAPTISM OF INFANTS

Please contact the parish office for baptism dates at least one month in advance.

### SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

The Sacrament is available upon request for persons who are seriously ill, scheduled for a medical procedure, or with a chronic condition. A person can be anointed as often as their condition warrants.



We're glad you came to join with us in our worship time today.  
We hope that you have felt God's love in a new, refreshing way.  
We look forward to seeing you again next week!

## SPECIAL NOTES



### POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTIONS

#### The Future of the Very Young

That every country take the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.

### MASS SCHEDULE

#### DAILY MASS TIMES

**Monday** St. Michael 8:15 am  
**Tuesday** St. John 8:15 am  
St. Mary 6:00 pm  
**Wednesday** St. Mary 8:15 am  
**Thursday** St. John 8:15 am  
St. Mary 12:15 pm  
**Friday** St. Michael 8:15 am

#### WEEKEND MASS TIMES

**Saturday** St. Mary 4:30 pm  
St. Michael 5:00 pm  
St. John 5:30 pm  
**Sunday** St. Mary - 7:30 am, 10:00 am,  
- Spanish Mass at 2:00  
St. Michael - 8:00 am, 10:30 am  
St. John - 9:00 am, 11:30 am

### TELEVISED SUNDAY MASSES

4:30 am Channel 2, WJBK Fox Detroit  
5:00 am Channel 11, WTOL Toledo  
6:00 am Channel 24, WNWO Toledo

### LIVESTREAM MASSES

Masses will continue to be livestreamed to our website or Facebook every Sunday from either  
St. Mary at 10:00 am  
or St. John at 11:30 am.

*The January 3rd mass will be  
livestreamed from*

*St. John Church at 11:30 am*

Following the livestream, these masses are archived and are available to watch from each website and will not require a Facebook account.

## A Christmas Note From Father David



As you view this Christmas 2020 issue of the Chronicle, I want to wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and faith-filled observance of the feast of Jesus' birth among us. This Christmas likely feels and looks very different because of our current situation, but the true meaning of Christmas remains valid - God with us, His people, in our human flesh. We are able to believe that as children of God, nothing can take away our dignity and our final goal: to share in God's very life. Even now, there is nothing that we experience that God cannot enter into and be a part of. I pray that you will find comfort in your faith in God to help you in any way that you have experienced loss or suffering because of the pandemic.

The parish staff, clergy, and I want to remind you that, no matter what your faith journey has been, we love you and need you. As a baptized person, you are a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. You help to make the Church a sign of divine grace by your personal witness.

In the coming months, we pledge to do all that we can to support you in your faith journey, and offer resources and opportunities to help you. For example, if you haven't yet done so, please check out a wonderful Catholic website to give you many ways that you can enrich and deepen your personal faith. This resource is called FORMED. It can be found at [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org). St. John and St. Mary parishes have a joint membership, and you can sign up easily by entering the zip code of St. John, 48161. (See below) Cards are also available in church. Be blessed this new year and find guidance, inspiration, and hope at [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org).

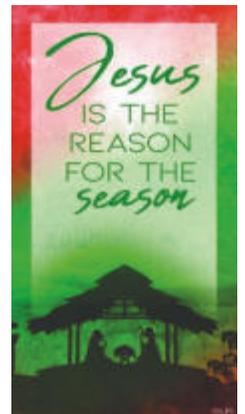
Your Christmas donation, to count as Christmas and not be subject to the archdiocesan assessment, must be received by the parish by next Sunday, January 3, 2021. Thank you for your generous support of the parish, especially as our income has been impacted by the pandemic in the last year.

### HAPPY NEW YEAR

We all pray that the new year of 2021 will bring with it new hope and opportunities as we move out of the pandemic crisis. Yet, whatever the year brings, we place it in God's hands, Who alone knows what is to come. We are simply called to be faithful and obedient to His will in all things.

January 1<sup>st</sup> is the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. Mass at St. Mary will be on Thursday, New Year's Eve, at 4:30 pm. I will lead the rosary before mass at 3:55 pm. Check the bulletin for mass times at the other local parishes. May Mary, who brought Jesus into our human flesh through her unconditional "yes" to God, guide us to her Son in all that 2021 holds in store for us!

Remember that Christmas is a season, not a day. This year, the Christmas season will conclude with the celebration of Jesus' baptism on Sunday, January 10. How can you honor Christmas throughout the season?



To Create a FORMED account:

1. Go to [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org)
2. Click *Sign-up*.
3. Select "I belong to a parish or organization".
4. Enter "48161" rather than the parish name.
5. Choose *St. John the Baptist* and enter Next.
6. Enter your name and email and you are in!
7. Be sure to bookmark the page for further use.
8. Go back to [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org) and click *Sign-In*.
9. Enjoy all of the content and "Start watching".



## MINISTRY SCHEDULE

January 2nd & 3rd	4:30 Mass	7:30 Mass	10:00 Mass
<b>EME</b>	Anna Dobberstein <b>Mary Dobberstein</b>	Jan Cousino <b>Vicki Kipf</b>	Judy Krueger <b>Russell Krueger</b>
<b>GREETERS:</b>	Justin Miller Anna Dobberstein	Kathy Jondro	Lorie Holden Jackie Steinman
<b>LECTORS</b>	Marilyn Laboe <b>Frank McAuliffe</b>	Lorie Bronson <b>Rick Montcalm</b>	<b>David Heilman</b> Lorie Holden

**LAY LEANINGS** By Deacon Mike Stewart © 2020 Mike Stewart Email: [layleanings@gmail.com](mailto:layleanings@gmail.com) Used with permission



I read about a 2020 calendar burning party on New Year's Eve. My first reaction was to chuckle in agreement ... I mean, who wouldn't want to turn the page so dramatically on such a challenging year, right? Those invited to this party were encouraged to bring their 2020 calendars and be prepared to let the carnage go up in smoke.

So how about you? Is 2020 something to regret and forget, or did God shine through the cracks in this past year? The thing about cracks is that we sometimes have to look more closely to see them. And sometimes we need to learn from the past in order to look with hope to the future.

Maybe, instead of burning your 2020 calendar, you can use your time more productively by spending time in reflection as you look back and look ahead. Why not invite God into this reflection?

Through the many challenges we all faced, and you in particular, what unexpected blessings did God provide you this past year? Look closely ... those blessings may be hard to see, but rest assured, they're there.

Did the fact that those blessings came amidst the many difficulties and tragedies of this past year mean more to you somehow?

Why do you suppose that God reserved those blessings for you in the past year rather of some other time, under different circumstances?

How did this past year change you? How are you different now than you were before the pandemic? Did you grow somehow as a person? Where do you see God's hand in those changes?

What lessons did you learn from this past year? What do you suppose God was trying to teach you through your experiences?

Where is God leading you in this new year? Have you prayed about that?

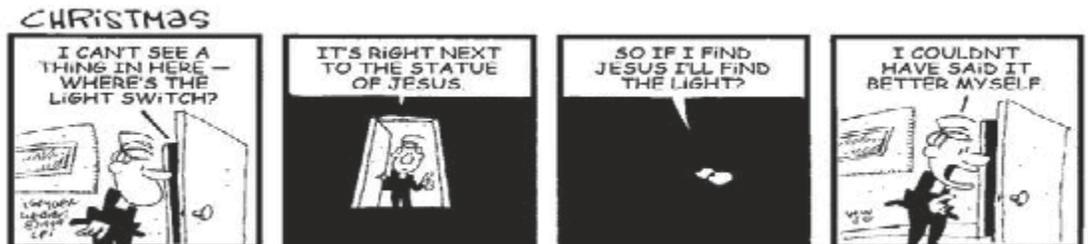
Do you fear the future? What's behind your fear? Are you able to surrender those fears to God, and trust God to lead you forward with confidence? If not, what's standing in your way?

Where does God fit into your future? See, the thing about God is that God is already in your future; God can see beyond the present moment. Can you?

A new year is a clean sheet of paper, and yet God has already written on yours. Trust that what he's written will lead you to a future full of hope.

*For I know well the plans I have in mind for you ... plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.*  
Jeremiah 29:11

The Lighter Side . . .



## MASS INTENTIONS

**Tuesday, December 29th**

**6:00 pm Mass**

People of the Parish

**Wednesday, December 30th**

**8:15 am Mass**

† Patrick Finn

**Thursday, December 31st**

**4:30 pm Mass** Father Giancarlo

† Loretta Aubry

† Jamie Heilman

**Saturday, January 2nd**

**4:30 pm Mass** - Father David

† Jim Morris

† Jim & Cindy West

**Sunday, January 3rd**

**7:30 am Mass** Fr. David

† Bob Beaubien

† Roy Griffith

† Clyde Kohler

**10:00 am Mass** - Father Giancarlo

† Jeanne Byron

† Leroy & Betty Calmes

† Larry Digue

† Norman J. Liedel

**2:00 pm - Spanish Mass** -Father Giancarlo

## PARISH OFFICE HOURS

The parish office is open for necessary business during the following hours until further notice.

**Monday 8:30 am - 4:00 pm**

(closed between noon & 1:00 for staff lunch)

**Wednesday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm**

**Friday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

(no lunch closures on Wednesdays and Fridays)

Please be aware that a mask will be required and there is a limited capacity allowed into the office.

Thank you for understanding and your cooperation.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

### THOSE IN NURSING HOMES OR ASSISTED LIVING

#### Alice Lorraine Care Center

John Kuras

#### Brookdale Joanne Bondy

#### Brookdale-Ann Arbor Beulah May

#### Cambrian, Tecumseh Melvin Jasper

#### Elderly Solutions Nancy Reaume

#### Fountain View Lorraine Young

#### IHM Care Center

Pascal Flameygh

Mary Foshag

Rose Mary Kennedy

Iris Schroeder

Jean Waybright

#### Wellspring Lutheran Home

Dolores Bodine

Barbara Matthews

Joyce Stein

Don Toeppe

### OUR MEN & WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

TSgt Matthew Marshall,  
USAF

Lt. Hunter Smith, USAF

LCpl Trevor Tomkinson

### FOR THE SICK AND UNEMPLOYED

Dawn Banerian

Amanda Blanchette

Elaine Boudrie

Deb and Dewey Edwards

Pat Dyer

Frank Kolakowski

Dave Karuss

Lawson Linden

Catherine & Martin

Nadeau

Tom Opperman

Ted Reed

Aysiah Rose Rennert

Mark & Theresa Tom

## ST. VINCENT De PAUL



### Pantry Needs

**Soups, SpaghettiOs, Peanut Butter, Jelly, and Mac n' Cheese**

Today is the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. During our New Year may our families "grow in wisdom and have the favor of God upon them."

This month, through your gifts, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was able to bring Christmas to the hearts of the poor. The people of St. Mary Parish always are there for those in need. You are forever in our prayers. Thanks!

Through your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul you are helping your neighbor who is hungry, hopeless and frightened to know that they belong to God.

Know that you are a constant in all our prayers.

P.S. Want to know more about our Society? Please send me an e-mail at: [jstbernard2017@comcast.net](mailto:jstbernard2017@comcast.net).

Visit our website at [www.svdpstmarymonroe.org](http://www.svdpstmarymonroe.org)

## HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

### MERRY CHRISTMAS

Monday, December 28 9:00 - Noon

1:00 - 4:00

Tuesday, December 29 Closed

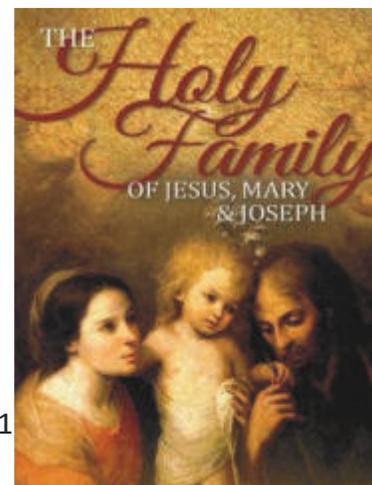
Wednesday, December 20 9:00 - 2:00

Thursday, December 31 Closed

Friday, January 1 Closed

### HAPPY NEW YEAR

Regular office hours begin on January 4, 2021





*Eternal Rest grant unto them O Lord And let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace AMEN.*



Family and friends of **Daniel George Toro** gathered to celebrate the Mass of the Resurrection and entrust his soul to the love and mercy of God.

One of seven children, Dan enlisted in the US Marine Corps at the age of eighteen. He served during the Vietnam conflict and was honorably discharged in 1967, earning the Vietnam Service Medal and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, as well as National Defense Service Medal.

In time, Dan obtained a teaching certificate and devoted his time and talent to serving others. He advocated for the underprivileged and taught developmentally disabled adults until his weakening health made it necessary for him to retire.

St. Mary Parish extends its sympathy and continuing prayerful support to Dan's family: his wife, Marcia, his daughter, Amanda (Tyler) Collins, his brothers, Joseph and Michael, his sister, Colleen; his grandchildren, Kathleen, Jasmine, Vada and Josie and his great-granddaughters; Kaycee and Madeline. May the hope of the resurrection comfort you and bring you peace.

## FUNERAL MASS PLANNING - IN ADVANCE

**Eternal Rest Grant to Them, O Lord  
And let Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them!**

In a culture that is often moot about the reality of our mortality (death), our church and faith share wisdom about this sacred time. Recognizing the longing within us to be in God's holy presence and the necessity of preparing for entry into our new and eternal life, it is good to set aside time to plan how we want to celebrate our earthly life at the time of our death.

What are some ways to prepare for our death? Creating a will, designating a trusted family member or friend to make medical decisions for you when needed, communicating with family regarding where important documents are kept and planning your Catholic Funeral are important steps in *assuring peace of mind for you and the members of your family. Planning in advance is a profound gift to your family!*

Many parishioners have already chosen the readings and music they would like at their funeral, which is a celebration of their earthly life as well as their eternal life in Christ. Parish staff members are available to help you with this aspect of funeral planning. Please contact the parish office: [parishoffice@stmarymonroe.org](mailto:parishoffice@stmarymonroe.org) or Lorie Bronson: [lorieb@stmarymonroe.org](mailto:lorieb@stmarymonroe.org) for more information.

## THE CALL TO BEAR ONE ANOTHER BURDENS



There is nothing quite like having someone by your side in challenging times.

**FACT:** Jesus Christ is beside us, and within us, accompanying us in every blessing and every difficulty!

**FACT:** Christ calls and equips others to be physically present in His name to accompany and comfort those who are experiencing tough times.

**FACT:** *Stephen Ministers reach out in Christ's name to those whose lives are marked with affliction of any kind; fear, anger, addiction, frustration, loss, separation, illness, impending death, grief, confusion . . . .*

**FACT:** Stephen Ministers listen attentively and non-judgmentally as they meet weekly for one hour with their care receivers.

**FACT:** Stephen Ministers in extending God's presence, compassion and grace are renewed by God in body, mind, and spirit for the work to which God has called them.

**FACT:** Stephen Ministry is one-to-one care that is grounded in Gospel values and is exemplified in the words and actions of Jesus.

**FACT:** Stephen Ministry is alive, well and growing in the Monroe Catholic community. The third training session will begin in 2021 as the COVID pandemic diminishes.

**QUESTION:** Is God calling you to consider this ministry?

To learn more about Stephen Ministry ([www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org)), register for training or request a Stephen Minister please contact John Castiglione: (313-363-3545 or [johncastiglione15@gmail.com](mailto:johncastiglione15@gmail.com))

*"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2*

O Come All Ye Faithful

# Faith Formation News

## The Nativity of the Lord



Our hearts are aglow with the joy of Christmas! Our senses are alive with the season, from the rich smells of evergreen and gingerbread to the feel of crisp air on our skin and the warmth of a loved one's embrace. At some point in the holiday hustle and bustle, take a few moments of quiet. In the silence, reflect on the other senses of the season. Imagine the cool damp of an animal stable, the earthy smell of hay and feed, and the crisp night air blowing in softly. Imagine kneeling beside an exhausted, joyful mother and a relieved, protective father. Imagine an infant wrapped in cloth scraps held out to your open arms. Imagine holding the infant Jesus. As his eyes meet yours, welcome into your heart the greatest gift of Christmas.

## IN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING



610 W. Elm Ave., Monroe (The old IHM Powerhouse)

**THANK YOU** to all who continue to support the work and mission of "In the Spirit of Giving". Your generosity continues to help the homeless and working poor of Monroe. Every gift of time, talent and treasure is needed and appreciated!

Most needed at this time are:

- ◆ **Twin-, full-, and queen-sized sheets, blankets, comforters**
- ◆ **Beds, lamps, dining tables and chairs, pots and pans and silverware.**

? Are you looking for a way to help those most in need in our Monroe community? We invite you to consider the following opportunities:

- ◆ Sharing a few hours each month (Wednesdays 2-4pm or Saturdays 10am – noon)
- ◆ Assisting people who come to "In the spirit of Giving" at the address above

**We also need those who own pick-up trucks and are willing to help bring furniture donations to the site of our ministry (see address above).**

? Do you have the physical stamina to lift and move furniture? We could use your help in partnering with our truck drivers as they bring donations to the Powerhouse and deliver chosen furniture items to those whom we serve.

If you answered "YES" to any of these questions, please contact either Lorie Bronson (734-241-6088) or email at [lorieb@stmarymonroe.org](mailto:lorieb@stmarymonroe.org) ) or Paul Jay (734-693-4649). Thank you!

## THANK YOU TO OUR ADVERTISERS

We are so fortunate to have the support of our advertisers to offset the costs of printing our bulletin. Thank them when you can and give them the support of your business which they need during these difficult times.

Also, mention that you saw their ad in our Parish bulletin.



A & M Transmission  
Allore Funeral Home  
Angel Tech  
Auto Body Plant Inc  
Bacarella Funeral Home  
Berkshire Hathaway  
David G. Swartout Builder  
Duffey Tire & Service Ctr.  
Exciting Windows  
F.G. Angelo & Sons  
Finishers Unlimited  
Friendly Ford Lincoln  
G.B. Construction

Hassett Title Co  
HomeTown Pharmacy  
LaRoy Door  
Lotus Financial Services  
Marflos Lawn Service  
Messina Concrete  
Michigan Grill  
Miller's Nu-Tech Plumb & Heat  
Mold & Air Quality Professional  
Public House Restaurant  
Right At Home In Home Care  
& Assistance  
R.J. D'Haene, LLC

Rupp Funeral Home  
Schafer Agencies, Inc.  
Sieb Plumbing & Heating  
Sisters, Servants of the IHM  
Stoneco of Michigan  
The UPS Store  
Thoma Trucking  
Tim Hortons Monroe  
Tom's Landscaping & Sod  
Westwood Dental  
Yinger Pharmacy Shoppe

**The Gift of Family**

What a year it has been! How will we speak of these times a decade from now? As time goes by, our impressions of this past year will certainly change. How we feel today about dealing with a killer virus and all the chaos surrounding that is still fresh for all. I would assume that most of us right now are also holding those we love a little closer and hugging them a little harder. Hopefully, even if the fears and concerns of 2020 dissipate in the future, the way we feel toward our family should never leave us.

Stewardship is certainly about everything. God has given us so much, great and small, profound and common. One of the greatest gifts that all have received is family. Families take all shapes and sizes and some look very different than others. For

some, family is a caretaker or temporary guardian. For others it is a friend when everyone else seems to have vanished. The bottom line is that, to quote a song from many years ago, “people need people.”

When God gave the world His only Son, the Incarnation did not come on a cloud or with a flash of light. He was born into a family. Jesus understood the gift of family all his life. Do you think that if having a family wasn’t important God would have still included this in the plan of salvation?

As this year draws to a close, remember your stewardship many days begins and ends with the people closest to you. Don’t misuse or take for granted this precious gift. God gives us gifts on purpose, even to His only begotten Son.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS ©LPi



Monroe Catholic Elementary Schools  
[www.mcesmonroe.com](http://www.mcesmonroe.com) 734-241-6335

There is still time to enroll for the 2019-2020 School Year! Call 734-241-6335 to set up a visit. We ask that all new transfer students take part in a shadow day, allowing them to preview MCES and all we have to offer!

**St. Michael Early Elementary Campus - Infant-1<sup>st</sup> Grade – 510 W. Front St.**

- Licensed Childcare with specialized classrooms for infants (from 6 weeks), mobiles, toddlers, and latchkey for preschool and school-age children.
- Extended care available from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm for an additional fee.
- Full or Half, three- or five-day Preschool
- Young 5s
- Kindergarten & 1st Grade
- Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students, including a reading intervention to help students with literacy needs.

Faith development through religious instruction, Mass, daily prayer, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

**St. John Elementary Campus – 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade – 521 S. Monroe St.**

- Differentiated and individualized education for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders.
- Special classes include: Technology/STEAM, Physical Education, Art, Music, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium, and numerous activities to enrich education.
- Faith development through weekly mass, prayer services, daily religious instruction, Stations of the Cross, Atrium, and Sacrament Preparation.

Extended care available from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm for an additional fee.

**St. Mary Middle School Campus – 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade – 151 N. Monroe St.**

- Self-contained 5th grade.
- 6th, 7th and 8th grades experience a 7-period day allowing for departmentalized teachers who master their field and numerous elective classes.
- Partnerships with St. Mary Catholic Central, including lunch, foreign language, and instrumental music.
- Faith development through weekly mass, prayer services, service learning, and daily religious instruction.

Student government, choir, travel experiences (Camp, Mackinac Island and Washington, DC) are highlights of each year.

**Monroe Catholic Elementary Schools is a Christ-centered, Catholic learning community committed to the academic excellence and spiritual development of every student.**



# Electronic Giving is a convenient, consistent way to help our church Grow!

All information will be kept strictly confidential, and used only to facilitate your stewardship of God's gifts



## Regarding your offertory support...

*During this time of disruption to our lives and the life of the parish, we continue to need the support of God's people spiritually and financially. We are so grateful to all who throughout the pandemic crisis have been supporting the parish by mailing in or dropping off their contributions. Now that masses have resumed, the offertory has improved, but we still fall short of our needs to finish out this year's budget. The parish has made adjustments to spending only on essentials. In addition, I am thankful to our parish staff who have been asked to make personal sacrifices in response to the decrease in parish income. We need them and their commitment to serve the Lord and God's people.*

*In our call to be good and generous stewards, we are invited to take an honest look at our changing personal and family situation and determine what our giving should be: equal sacrifice, not equal gifts. As we take small steps forward, we will continue to adjust the parish budget to meet the reality of our present resources. Please help us to continue to be the Catholic witness that God has made us to be since St. Mary was founded over 200 years ago.*

**THANK YOU SO MUCH!**

### What is Electronic Giving?

- Automatically transfers givers' contributions from their checking or savings account.
- It is a hassle-free and fee-free, simple solution for today's busy families.
- You have the freedom to modify or cancel transactions at any time.

### How does it benefit me?

- It is easy, convenient and safe.
- Keep consistent Stewardship, even when you are on vacation.
- Allows you to set your weekly donation and forget it!
- You can make changes to your donation at any time.

### How do I sign up?

- Simply fill in the following information and return it with a VOIDED check from your account. Place the completed form in an envelope and drop it in the offertory collection.
- You can also deliver your ACH offering authorization to the parish office.

### How does it help our church?

- Eliminates the need for paper checks and the processing fees that come with them.
- Easier to forecast cash flow.
- Saves staff time processing checks.

I authorize St. Mary Parish, Monroe, MI, to initiate electronic debit entries to my:

Checking Account     Savings Account

In the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be withdrawn monthly (15th of each month)

Name of Financial Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Routing/Transit Number \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that the origination of ACH (Automated Clearing House) transactions to my account must comply with the provisions of U.S. Law. This authority will remain in effect until I have cancelled in writing.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHURCH RIGHT NOW?

To make an online gift to St. Mary, please go to [give.aod.org](http://give.aod.org) (be sure to select St. Mary Parish, Monroe) or complete and return the Electronic Giving entry form above. Thank you for supporting St. Mary parish at this critical time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges to the Archdiocese of Detroit and our parishes, including offertory funds lost due to the suspension of public liturgies. Parishes rely on the generosity of their members to cover expenses related to ministry, maintenance, staffing, community outreach programs and other pressing needs.



**Sunday, Dec 27, 2020**

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

**The measure of success**

Fruitfulness is a sign that we're doing something right. Plant a seed, water it, give it light, and it brings forth a shoot. Neglect it, and get nothing. We measure success in terms of fruitfulness: schooling completed, jobs held, relationships that endure, children raised, financial security, years lived, virtues practiced. God blessed Abram with wealth and years, but to that old man, the only true measure of success was a child. By what standard do you evaluate your life's worth? What's required for you to say in the end: "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace?"

TODAY'S READINGS: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1] or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 [7a, 8a]/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40 "But Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what good will your gifts be, if I keep on being childless?'"

**Monday, Dec 28, 2020**

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

**Suffer little children**

On the heels of the joyful celebration of the birth of our Savior, we remember the Holy Innocents—all the baby boys who were murdered by Herod in his attempt to kill the child Jesus. Remember too all those innocents who die today at the hands of their governments and who are victims of institutional and structural violence. About the Holy Innocents, Matthew quotes Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children . . ." Console today's mourning mothers by fighting for children's rights and protections.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8 [7]/Mt 2:13-1 "My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin."

**Tuesday, Dec 29, 2020**

FIFTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; MEMORIAL OF THOMAS BECKET, BISHOP, MARTYR

**Choosing right vs. might**

Thomas Becket found himself having to choose between an earthly king and Christ the King. The cleric Thomas befriended England's Henry II—leading Henry to appoint him chancellor. Later, when Henry spotted a chance to wield power over church affairs, he named his friend the archbishop of Canterbury. But Thomas would not go along with Henry's plans. Repercussions followed, and in 1170 Thomas was brutally murdered—in Canterbury Cathedral—by the king's men. Though perhaps with less dramatic outcomes, standing up for your convictions may cost you, too. Are you willing to pay the price?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 [11a]/Lk 2:22-3 "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many."

**Wednesday, Dec 30, 2020**

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

**The party never ends**

On this sixth day of the Octave, the Christmas celebration continues. Or it can—even if the culture around us has moved on. Especially in pandemic days, you may feel challenged to find hope and joy in the promise that God is with us. So celebrate by sharing that Divine Love, however you feel able to. Bake and share cookies, make a call to someone you may have overlooked this busy season, write a note of gratitude to someone who

challenges you, or contribute to an organization that cares for mothers and children in this season of the Holy Family. Take time in prayer to recollect and give thanks for any awareness of God's presence in recent days. *Loving God, help me remember that Christmas is not a day but rather a season that invites me to see you at work in my life every day.*

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 [11a]/Lk 2:36-4 "And coming forward at that very time, [Anna] gave thanks to God and spoke about the child."

**Thursday, Dec 31, 2020**

SEVENTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

**The light still shines**

We might well ring out a difficult year with the words of today's psalmist: "Let the heavens be glad and the Earth rejoice!" Rejoicing implies an expectation of better things to come, placing us firmly within the Christian virtue of hope. Christians are hopeful for many reasons, starting with the fact that Jesus's death led to resurrection. The church teaches, too, that hope lies in building the kingdom of God on Earth, "as it is in heaven." Lift up your hopes for 2021 to God, and be ready to work for them with God's grace.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Jn 2:18-21/Ps 96:1-2, 11-12, 13 [11a]/Jn 1:1-18 "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

**Friday, Jan 01, 2021**

WORLD DAY OF PEACE; OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

**Renew the face of the Earth**

We have longed for the year 2020 to be over, to move away from the pandemics that have wounded us collectively and individually. With 2021 on the calendar now, it feels like maybe, just maybe we can start anew at some point. Given the chance, we, along with all of creation, have the capacity to renew, that is, to be "new again"—not only each year but each moment. An essential ingredient to renewal is peace. The church calls us to follow Christ the Way of Peace, as Pope Benedict said on this day in 2007, "with hearts full of hope, notwithstanding the dangers and difficulties that surround us." Let us pray for *and choose* peace for ourselves and for the world in all that we renew this year.

TODAY'S READINGS: Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 [2a]/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-2 *Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.*"

**Saturday, Jan 02, 2021**

MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN, BISHOPS, DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

**Spiritual friendship lasts for ages**

Spiritual friendship is one of the greatest gifts of life in a faith community. Basil and Gregory, fourth-century patriarchs of the Eastern Church, had such a friendship and spurred each other on to great accomplishments and service in their spiritual lives. We all need community and spiritual support as we work through the mysteries of our own personal lives and the challenges presented by a suffering world. Who can you count on for support and encouragement in these hard times? Do your resolutions for this new year include cultivation of spiritual community and friendships?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 [3cd]/Jn 1:19-28 "All the ends of the Earth have seen the salvation by our God."

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time*



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