

# THE DRIFT

Blue Water Vicariate

December 2020

## From the Vicar

We are now in the holy season of Advent—a time of joyful anticipation and preparation. Society emphasizes this as an opportunity for partying, decorating, and Christmas shopping—and there’s nothing necessarily wrong with these things—but the Church focuses on the spiritual meaning of these four weeks.

Advent, which begins the Church’s liturgical year, is intended as a time for us to prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ’s birth. As noted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, She makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for His second coming” (n. 524).

May these coming weeks, even as they’re filled with activities and busy-ness, truly be for you and your loved ones a time of peace and an opportunity to rejoice in God’s grace.

## Reconciliation

Due to social distancing considerations, this year the Blue Water Vicariate will **not** be holding its customary Communal Penance Services for Advent. Most of our parishes will instead have additional times for individual Confessions in the days leading up to Christmas. Please consult the schedule in your parish bulletin.

## Christmas Mass Schedules

The Archdiocese is anticipating that, due to the usual heavier-than-usual Mass attendance for Christmas, social distancing in church may be difficult to maintain. Many parishes will have special arrangements for larger congregations, such as live-streaming Mass to an additional location (e.g., a parish hall or gymnasium).

In addition to such efforts, the Archdiocese is also taking the unusual step of inviting everyone to consider attending Mass **only once during the four-day period of Thursday December 24 (Christmas Eve) through Sunday December 27** (the Feast of the Holy Family). In other words, to alleviate crowding, you are free to choose attending Mass either for Christmas (December 24-25) or for the weekend (December 26-27).

If you choose to attend Mass both times, please cooperate with your parish’s safety guidelines and precautions.

## Welcome Deacon David!

A permanent deacon from Maryland, Deacon David Ebner, has relocated to Michigan with his wife, and Archbishop Vigneron has assigned him to minister at Immaculate Conception Parish in Ira Township.

Eight of the ten parishes in the Blue Water Vicariate are blessed to have permanent deacons assigned to them, and they minister in varied and valuable ways (often behind the scenes, in addition to assisting at Mass).

This is a good opportunity to acknowledge and thank them for their important and fruitful ministry, and also to encourage men who may be considering this ministry for themselves, whether now or in the future. (Those desiring more information may contact the archdiocesan Vocations Office at 313-868-7040.)

## Family of Parishes Update

On Friday December 11 Archbishop Vigneron will be issuing a pastoral letter which will list the 51 different Families of Parishes, and state whether a given Family will be in Wave One (with implementation to occur next year) or Wave Two (to occur in 2022). The Archbishop, in consultation with the regional bishops, vicars, and Presbyteral Council, has carefully reviewed the recommendations from each vicariate as to which specific parishes should be combined into families, or parish groupings.

Each family will consist of three-to-six parishes who will eventually share clergy, coordinate Mass schedules, and work more closely together (while maintaining separate financial accounts and resources). All this is intended to help the Church in southeast Michigan continue spreading the Gospel and meeting the needs of its people, even as the number of priests steadily declines.

Much prayer and planning for this transition has already taken place, and more information will be shared as it becomes available.

## Election Aftermath

Even though it’s roughly a month since the 2020 presidential election, our nation remains deeply polarized and divided—and this highlights the need for all of us to continue praying for a national spirit of unity and healing. Above all, we must pray that our country will turn back to God—for only by honoring and obeying Him can America hope to prosper and endure.

## Christmas Joy

In one of his sermons St. Augustine wrote, “Rejoice you who are just. It is the birthday of Him Who justifies. Rejoice you who are weak and sick. It is the birthday of Him Who makes people well. Rejoice you who are in captivity. It is the birthday of the Redeemer. Rejoice you who are slaves. It is the birthday of the Master. Rejoice you who are free. It is the birthday of Him Who makes us free.”

May these days of Advent, and the coming celebration of Christmas, truly be a time of blessing and joy for you and your families.

Fr. Joe Esper





November 12, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

During these difficult months during the pandemic, I have granted a general dispensation from the grave obligation that we as Catholic Christians have to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation in the Archdiocese of Detroit, in-part to help ease the conscience of those who are unable to be present for public worship due to risk of illness to themselves or their families. The most recent dispensation expires on November 22, at which point we had hoped the pandemic would have eased enough to allow all of us to return in an unrestricted way to our celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. Unfortunately, local and state health officials report that we not only continue to experience an increase in cases in our region and elsewhere, but that the rate of increase is rising dramatically and dangerously. I have been in communication with leaders in our Catholic hospitals and they are very concerned about the immediate future and the challenges they face caring for all those in need, not just those experiencing serious complications from COVID.

After carefully considering these and other factors, I am extending the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation for people living in or visiting the Archdiocese of Detroit until Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021. As we have from the beginning, we will continue to closely monitor the situation in our region, with an eye on the day - hopefully in the not-to-distant future - when all of us are able to safely reunite in our normal patterns of worship.

This extension is given so as not to unduly bind the consciences of those who are greatly troubled by the destructive potency of the coronavirus, and to care for the most vulnerable among us, such as the elderly. At the same time, one should not take advantage of the dispensation without a true need. Catholics who have already begun to engage in non-essential activities, such as widening one's social circle or going out to eat, should return to Sunday Mass - an essential activity - as church capacity allows. Our souls greatly need the grace that comes from the re-presentation of Christ's saving death and resurrection and this is what Jesus has entrusted to us in

the celebration of the Mass. Just as businesses, schools, and other locations have opened safely, so have our parishes. Our pastors, parishes, and the faithful have worked diligently and adapted well in order to ensure the health and well-being of everyone who has been able to come to church for Mass, Confession, or to pray. I want to offer my sincere gratitude for the efforts that have been undertaken to implement and maintain the first-rate precautionary measures that have kept our parishes and schools safe.

Whether or not they are able to attend Mass, all baptized Catholics are reminded of the grave necessity they have to keep holy the Lord's Day. This a divine law that neither I nor anyone else can ever dispense. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection of our Lord, and as such Christians from the earliest days have set it apart as a day unlike others. When it is not possible to participate in person in the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is vitally important for every member of the Catholic Church to observe the Sabbath by prioritizing prayer, time for God and for family, and works of charity. To that end, many of our parishes have been broadcasting their services over the internet during these last several months. While this virtual means of watching Mass can never replace the unmediated contact with the Real Presence of Our Lord we receive by being present and participating in Mass, these livestreamed Masses have been a way to help Catholics nourish their souls when they cannot be present for Mass.

Let us trust that the Lord accompanies us through all difficulties, including this pandemic. As we approach Advent and prepare for flu season, we should remember to pray daily for health care workers, first responders, including our priests, and all who are and will offer compassionate service and healing in the months to come. Let us also continue to invoke Our Lady of Lourdes, patroness for those who suffer illness, asking her to pray with us for healing and protection for the people of southeast Michigan and beyond.

With assurances of my prayers for you, I remain,  
Sincerely yours in Christ,  
The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron  
Archbishop of Detroit

## Are You Ready For A Challenge?

Matthew Kelly, from *Dynamic Catholic*, recently gave a message on being taken for granted, and offered a gratitude challenge. He stated, "Nobody likes feeling taken for granted. And yet, we all take people, and things, and opportunities, and even God for granted from time to time. This month, I would like to issue a gratitude challenge. Every day for the next 30 days, I challenge you to do two things:

1. Take two minutes to reflect on all you have to be grateful for, and thank God.
2. Express gratitude to someone in your life.

Do these two things each day for the next month, and you will be amazed how these simple exercises can have such a powerful impact on your life and relationships."



# 2021

## MARCH FOR LIFE

January 28-30, 2021  
- Washington, DC -

### Tentative Itinerary

Subject to change  
(final schedule will be included in your trip packet)

**Thursday, January 28th**  
6:00am: Departure from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church-Emmett, MI  
6:00pm: Hotel Check-in

**Friday, January 29th**  
1:00pm: Morning free time  
**Participate in the March for Life!**  
Evening free time

**Saturday, January 30th**  
6:00am: Depart from hotel  
6:00pm: Arrive at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church-Emmett, MI

OCCUPANCY	RATE
QUAD (4/ROOM)	\$195/PERSON
TRIPLE (3/ROOM)	\$225/PERSON
DOUBLE (2/ROOM)	\$255/PERSON
PRIVATE ROOM	\$365/PERSON

- RATES INCLUDE TRAVEL AND LODGING- MEALS ARE NOT INCLUDED
- SPACE IS LIMITED AND SPOTS WILL BE FILLED IN THE ORDER IN WHICH FORMS AND PAYMENT ARE RECEIVED
- WAIVERS WILL NEED TO BE SIGNED PRIOR TO DEPARTURE
- MINORS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY PARENT OR AUTHORIZED ADULT CHAPERONE
- COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED WHICH MEANS MASKS WILL BE WORN ON THE BUS

REGISTRATION FORMS AND PAPERWORK AVAILABLE AT:  
**WWW.RTLSC.COM**  
TRIP ORGANIZED BY RIGHT TO LIFE OF SANILAC COUNTY  
CALL 810-531-4746 OR 989-280-6148 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## Blue Water Vicariate Directory

Including Weekend Mass and Confession Times (Please call for daily Mass schedule or to confirm)

### Holy Family Parish (Memphis)

Phone: 810-392-2056

**Masses:** Saturday 4:30 pm, Sunday 10:30 am & 5:30 pm

**Confession:** Saturday 3:30 pm

### St. Augustine Parish (Richmond) \*

Phone: 586-727-5215

**Masses:** Saturday 6 pm, Sunday 7:30 am & 9 am

**Confession:** Wednesday 8:45 am Saturday 5 pm

### Holy Trinity Parish

#### St. Joseph Church (Port Huron)

Phone: 810-984-2689

**Mass:** Sunday 7 am

#### St. Stephen Church (Port Huron)

Phone: 810-984-2689

**Masses:** Saturday 4 pm, Sunday 9 am & 11 am

**Confession:** Wednesday 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Saturday 9 am to 10 am

### Immaculate Conception Parish (Ira Township) \*

Phone: 586-725-3051

**Masses:** Saturday 4:30 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am & 12 pm

**Confession:** Saturday 3:30 pm

Thursday after 8:30 am Mass

### Our Lady on the River Parish

#### Holy Cross Church (Marine City) \*

Phone: 810-765-3568

**Masses:** Saturday 6 pm, Sunday 7:30 am & 9:30 am

**Confession:** Friday after 9 am Mass

#### St. Catherine of Alexandria Church (Algonac)

**Masses:** Saturday 4 pm, Sunday 11:30 am

**Confession:** Saturday 3 pm

#### St. Mark Chapel (Harsens Island)

**Mass:** Sunday 10am

### St. Christopher Parish (Marysville)

Phone: 810-364-4100

**Masses:** Sunday 8 am, 11 am & 5:30 pm

**Confession:** Sunday 4 pm - 5 pm

## Submitting Info to The Drift

To submit information or events within the Blue Water Vicariate to be included in this monthly publication, be sure to include all pertinent information (i.e. organization, event name, location, contact, time and cost) and email to [editor@iccatholic.org](mailto:editor@iccatholic.org).

**Please note: We are unable to accept any handwritten or phone submissions. Only email, word, pdf, jpg, txt files can be accepted (nothing in publisher, please).**

### St. Edward on the Lake (Lakeport) \*

Phone: 810-385-4340

**Masses:** Saturday 5 pm, Sunday 10 am & 12 pm

**Tridentine Mass:** Sunday 8 am

**Confession:** Sunday 7:30 am & 9:30 am,

Tuesday & Wednesday 7:30 am, Thursday 6 pm,

Saturday 7:30am, 8:30 am & 4 pm, First Friday 6:30 pm

### St. Mary Parish (Port Huron) \*

Phone: 810-982-7906

**Masses:** Saturday 5 pm, Sunday 9 am, & 11 am

**Confession:** Saturday 4 pm, Thursday 8:45 am-9:30 am,

2nd Saturday 12-12:30 pm, 1st Friday 8-9 pm or by appt.

### St. Mary Parish (St. Clair)

Phone: 810-329-2255

**Masses:** Saturday 4:30 pm, Sunday 8:30 am & 11:30 am

**Confession:** Saturday 10 -10:30 am

### St. Mary Queen of Creation (New Baltimore)

Phone: 586-725-2441

**Masses:** Saturday 4:30 pm, & 6:30 pm, Sunday 9 am & 11 am

**Tridentine Mass:** Sunday 1:00 pm

**Confession:** Wednesday during 6 pm Holy Hour

Saturday 11:30 am and 3 pm

\* Indicates Catholic School on campus

**Cardinal Mooney Catholic High School (Marine City)**

**Phone:** 810-765-8825



**The Drift**  
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**The Rev. Joseph Esper**  
Vicar and Pastor, Immaculate Conception Parish

**Next Article Deadline: December 18, 2020**

**Next Issue: January 3, 2021**

**Submit info to The Drift via e-mail at**  
[editor@iccatholic.org](mailto:editor@iccatholic.org)  
**(only email submissions please)**

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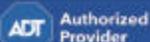
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