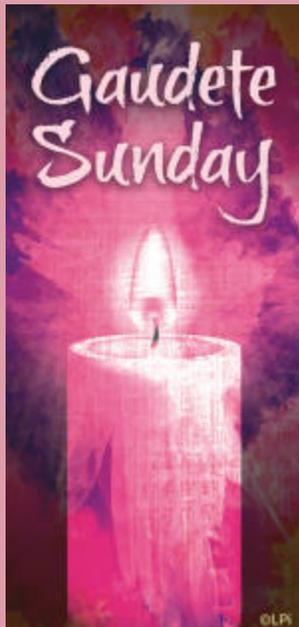




*St. Mary Great Mother of God
Catholic Church*

December 16, 2018

The Third Sunday of Advent



Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming." - Lk 3:15-16a

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

St. Mary Great Mother of God Masses for the Week of December 17, 2018

Mon	Dec	17	7:45 a.m.	Mass-for the repose of the soul of Joe Myles
Tue	Dec	18		No Mass today
Wed	Dec	19	7:45 a.m.	Mass- for the repose of the soul of Bill Gamble
			8:30 am-6:45 pm	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
			5-6 p.m.	Confession
Thur	Dec	20	7:45 a.m.	Mass-for the repose of the soul of Bill Gamble
Fri	Dec	21	7:45 a.m.	Mass-for Cathy Gutowski
Sat	Dec	22	8:00 a.m.	Rosary
			8:30 a.m.	Mass-for the perseverance of all priests & religious
			3-4:30 p.m.	Confession
			5:00 p.m.	Mass- for the repose of the soul of Bill Gamble
Sun	Dec	23	10:30 a.m.	Mass- for all parishioners



"In Mary holy virginity gave birth to Christ."--Saint Augustine

MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR WEEKEND OF December 22 & 23

Saturday, 5:00 pm

Lectors	Mike Lessens
Altar Servers	D. Huhn
Ex. Ministers of of Holy Communion	J. Serne, K. Schnipke, R. Stump
Laurels of Kent	
Fountain View/Green Acres	
Homebound	
Lacey's	
Sacristan	R. Stump
Ushers	J. Ormiston, T. Fitzpatrick Dick Johnson, Gerald Eagan
Flowers	Mary Helen DeLiefde



Sunday, 10:30 am

Beth Pfaller
K. Mills, C. & A. Posati
J. Inbody, N. & L. Mills,
K. Reynolds, W. Alderink
St. Patrick #2
J. Serne
J. Serne
J. Inbody
E. Pugh
B. Baker, D. Inbody, C. Nelson
Andrew Inbody

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE: Deposit for 12/9/2018

Adult Envelope Collection	\$ 5065.07
Loose Collection	\$ 414.00
Children's Collection	\$ 43.50
Total Weekend Collection	\$ 5522.57
Total needed for budget	\$ 5300.00

If you use auto-pay, please put your envelope number as the account number. Thank you!





Faith Formation News

Epic: A Journey through Church History is a captivating and fast-paced look at the story of the Catholic Church. Beginning with the lives of the apostles all the way up to the present day, *Epic* takes the immense history of the Church and simplifies it into twelve, color-coded time periods. In the course of twenty sessions, participants learn about the major people, places, and events that comprise the captivating story of Christianity. This study provides participants with an understanding of Church history that enables them to have a greater sense of meaning and identity as Catholics. We will meet on

Wednesdays at 10 a.m. To sign up for the study, contact Jennie at stmarylowelldre@gmail.com or join us for a class to check it out! All are welcome!

Monday evening Bible study will not meet throughout the winter. It will resume in the Spring.

High School Youth Group will meet in the St. Joseph room on Sunday, December 16th from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. All high school students are welcome!

Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest All children ages 5-14 are invited to design an original 11x17 inch poster to reflect the “Keep Christ in Christmas” theme. Child’s name and age should be printed on the back of the poster. Contest entrants compete in one of three age groups – ages 5 through 7, ages 8 through 10, and ages 11 through 14. Blank poster paper is located on the table in the vestibule. Posters are due back to the church by Sunday, December 16th. Winning posters will be on display for the Christmas Masses.

Reminder: There will be no faith formation classes on Sunday, December 23rd or Sunday, December 30th. Classes resume on Sunday, January 6th.



Gifts for the Laurels of Kent Giving Tree are due back, wrapped with tag on by December 16th. Thanks!

Parish Priest: Fr. Aaron Ferris

email: fatherferris@gmail.com

Secretary: Rhonda Fitzpatrick,

616-897-9820, email: stmarylowell@att.net

Director of Religious Education Jennie Forney

email: stmarylowelldre@att.net

Web site: stmarylowell.com

Office hours: Mon- Thurs 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Office closed on Friday.

MASS SCHEDULE

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri: 7:45 am

Saturday: 8:30 am & 5:00 pm

Sunday: 10:30 am

RECONCILIATION

Saturdays 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm Wednesdays 5-6pm

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Wednesdays after the 7:45 am Mass ending with evening prayer and Benediction at 6:45 pm.

Please call the parish office to schedule the Sacraments of Baptism, Marriage and Anointing of the Sick. **All Are Welcome Here!**

Happy Birthday to You!

12/25 Emily Coble

12/26 Heidi Kolp

12/27 Debra Baker, Nigel Mika, Jill Smith

Jamie Brabant

12/28 Gerald Egan, Sophie Doyle,

Frances Boucher



Volunteer Appreciation Dinner



The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is Saturday, January 19, 2019 after the 5:00 p.m. Mass. If you volunteered at the parish in 2018, please RSVP on the sign-up sheet in the north vestibule or call the parish office to RSVP. We are so grateful and thankful for our volunteers!

December 16, 2018 3rd Sunday of Advent

In Christianity, we hear often about the "Good News." We might often associate it with Jesus' compassion to the poor, his healings and miracles, and the salvation he won for us. In today's Gospel, we read of John the Baptist. "Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people." Yet as we examine the rest of the reading, we see examples of John's preaching. If you have two cloaks, give one away. Don't cheat others out of their money, extort, or lie. And, of course, the warning that the Messiah is on the move and "his winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Merry Christmas?

Not only do John's listeners enjoy his message, but they seem to think he might be the awaited Messiah! To understand today's Gospel, it's important to understand the Jewish people. For most of their history, God's chosen people had been under someone else's heel. They were slaves in Egypt. Their kingdoms were ravaged first by the Assyrians, then the Babylonians. Now they were under the yoke of the Roman Empire. Familiar with being strangers in a strange land, welcoming the stranger, caring for the vulnerable, and enacting justice was incredibly important to them as a people. While John's words may seem odd or strong to our modern ears, this call to justice was welcome, even if it was directed at the hearer. The truth is, no one is exempt from John's call to repentance. We all have further to go in the Christian life. We can all grow in virtue and love our neighbors more generously. The Church gives us the Advent season to examine our own hearts. Did any of John's warnings resonate with you? That could be a great thing to bring to Jesus this week!

LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

This Gaudete Sunday calls us to rejoice because the Lord is near. Does your heart rejoice and sing, or are the pressures and burdens of life weighing you down? We can easily become overwhelmed. The weaknesses and sins of life, indeed our own weakness and sin, eat away at the joy and hope God wants us to know. Those who are grounded in their faith and possess deep spiritual lives know that God is near. Realizing this puts life into perspective. We really want to be free from our burdens but do not always know how to achieve this. We keep stumbling and falling. Advent is a time when we can learn to "do life differently," just like John the Baptist instructed the crowds. Joy and hope are the gifts God offers, not anxiety and despair.



K. of C. Annual Coat Drive



The Knights of Columbus are collecting new and gently used coats again this year. The coats will be taken to Curtis Cleaners for cleaning and will go to the Veterans and to Flat River Outreach. Please put them in the box in the vestibule. They will be collected through the end of December. Thank you for your kindness!



Rest in Peace-for our deceased & their loved ones: Armose Labine, Victims of war, terrorism, natural disasters, and all the faithful departed.

Support Prayers for comfort & healing to those who are ill or injured, for the homebound & for caregivers: Chris Brigman, Betsy Davidson, Tom Rasch, Gary Whitney (Kathy Horsch's brother), Mike Roskamp, Rob Shay, Gordon Reynolds, Larry Patrick Sr., Larry Patrick III, June Horsch, Edna Corrigan, Marilyn Brown, Rita Gordon, Al Ketchum, Tom Scheidel, Gloria (Fr. Fekete's sister), Keith Brown, Patricia Reynolds, Rosemary Gamble, Jane Finch, Elaine Miller, Don & Kathy King, Jim Bieber, Cory Radel, Donna Roskamp, Peg Hoover, Sarah Klein, Mark Smith, Cara Miranda, Carla Swain, Jeff Bowles, Michael Toczydlowski, Cara Sauber, Dawn Huesing, Lee Rea, Dave & Martha Roskamp, Ron Geldersma, Eugene Smith, the unemployed, Michigan's economy, members of our armed forces and war wounded, justice and peace in the world, and for all priests and religious, and the Holy Catholic Church.

We ended last week's discussion on reception of the Eucharist by talking about participating at Mass. A question that follows on this is: how much of Mass do I have to be at for it to count (to fulfill my Sunday obligation)? The more colloquial version is: how late can I be to Mass for it to count? A related question would be: when is it too late to receive the Eucharist?

These are important questions because there are realities that disrupt our lives. A flat tire makes you late for Mass. A baby blows out his diaper right when you are walking out the door. There are any number of realities that impede our life. We must be very careful, though, that the above questions arise because of these sorts of things and not from a desire to justify chronic tardiness.

There is no official ruling by the Church, but the standard theological approach is that (1) if you miss the Gospel you should not receive the Eucharist and (2) if you miss the Offertory you do not fulfill the obligation for participating at Mass.

There is a deep connection between the two parts of Mass, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In both parts we encounter Jesus, and, in fact, Jesus prepares us through the Liturgy of the Word to receive Him in the Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council talks about one table of the Word and of the Body. There is one Person behind both actions, both liturgical movements, and encountering Him in one prepares us to receive Him intimately in the next. If you arrive too late to encounter Him in the Word, then you are not prepared to approach Him in the more intimate encounter of the Eucharist.

It is also good to remember that you do not have to receive Communion to fulfill your Sunday obligation. The Church only obliges you to receive Communion once a year during the Easter Season (Easter to Pentecost). The Church says this in part because Mass isn't just about us getting something. We gather to offer sacrifice to the Lord, to offer up anew the one sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.

This brings us to the second point: if you miss the Offertory you do not fulfill your Sunday obligation. The central action of the Mass is the sacrifice of Christ made present on the altar and re-offered to God each day. This action is broken down into the Offertory (gathering and preparation of the gifts), the Consecration (Eucharist Prayer), and Communion (primarily the priest's reception of Communion). To miss the Offertory means that you have missed your participation in offering up your life in union with the gifts of bread and wine. It means you have no participation in the sacrifice being offered.

The Offertory ends with the prayer after the priest washes his hands. The priest invites the people to pray "that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Almighty Father." If you haven't participated in that, you have missed an essential element of the sacrifice quite explicitly. Missing the sacrifice also means you have failed to fulfill your Sunday obligation (and Holy Day Obligation).

Again, the Church has not officially spoken on these issues, but these have been the general standards proposed, and with good reason. They are worth our consideration, even if they underlying issues are not relevant to us. They can help keep our attention focused on what truly matters.

Just a reminder that if you have photos of parish events, to e-mail them to Rhonda Fitzpatrick at the parish office stmarylowell@att.net. If you are able to snap a few photos with your phone at parish events, they may make their way into the bulletins and the parish calendar. Thank you!

Thank you to all who participated in the SCRIP program last weekend. We earned a record \$321--at no additional cost to you! God bless you and have a blessed Advent and Christmas season!



The month of December our rosary intention is for families. As Mary and Joseph prepare for their family, let us ask God to bless our families. We pray for guidance, love and try to lead our lives with the examples of the Holy Family.



Ben Mullins will be leading a Children's choir who will sing Christmas Carols one half hour prior to the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass. Children and teens of all ages are invited to come to practices (& bring instruments) Mondays Dec. 3rd, 10th, 17th & Friday, Dec. 21st.

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