



St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

Madison Heights, MI www.stvincentferrer.net

DECEMBER 10, 2023 † SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

From The Pastor

Forty has long been an active biblical number that conveys both linear time and spiritual seasons. After liberation from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites traveled forty years in the desert seeking the Promised Land. John the Baptist spent forty days, a long time, in the wilderness of the desert seeking God's purpose for his life. Jesus spent forty days in the desert doing the same thing as he wrestled with accepting his identity as the Beloved Son of the Father. None of these journeys were easy, but each in their own way revealed and accomplished a Divine purpose in the wisdom of God's will for humanity and creation.

When I was forty years old, I did a thirty-day retreat on the Atlantic Coast at Eastern Point Jesuit Retreat Center. It was a challenging and blest experience; even more so now to think that was over thirty years ago. During that time, I came across the Book of Deuteronomy 2:7. 'The Lord your God has blest you in all your undertakings; he has been concerned about your journey through this vast desert. It is now forty years that he has been with you, and you have never been in want.' This verse has come to mind frequently over the years. Through thick and thin, God has clearly set my path, defended, protected, and remained ever-present to me over these forty years. I have no doubt God will remain.

Ordained in 1983 at the age of 31, I began my internship year at St. Sylvester Parish in Warren, followed by three years at St. Francis Cabrini in Allen Park, then two years at Our Lady of Sorrows in Farmington. At this point, I was asked to be the College Spiritual Director at Sacred Heart Seminary. I remained for ten years, followed by eight years as pastor of St. Lucy Parish in St. Clair Shores. In those years I began, through the invitation of the Archdiocese, an active healing, inner healing, and deliverance ministry. For more than ten years, I have with Deborah Tourville, led Inner Healing retreats at Manresa Jesuit Retreat House in Bloomfield Hills. It has been a transforming experience of full retreats and a waiting list most years. Eighteen years ago, I was blest to be assigned here at St. Vincent Ferrer.

The years can only be characterized by the light of grace. Never, ever would I have imagined the course of these years as I left the Seminary forty years ago. I know for a fact that in these years of ministry, a lot more has happened than I have done. Only by the grace of God have people found healing, freedom, insight, conversion, or any other blessing than by the grace God alone can give. It is humbling, even mind boggling.

It has long been my conviction to preach the love and mercy of God. Some have asked through the years, 'where do you get all that?' I get it from Jesus, who else? I didn't do it or think of it. It is the gift of God's

grace. Love is truth, God is love, Jesus Christ is God. God is the essence of love in undivided unity. God is total and perfect self-surrender fully given and realized in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus, in the fullness of his true self as a fully realized human being reveals in himself the Divine nature. Through the work of redemption in the death of Jesus, without bitterness or resentment, we are called to share in the same Divine nature. As we say at Mass as the priest puts water into the wine at the offertory, 'that we may come to share in your Divinity as you humbled yourself to share in our humanity'. Jesus is the mercy of God. Mercy is the Divine justice. Mercy is God's unlimited, unconditional, freely given forgiveness to the undeserving.

What other God is worthy of our faith, trust, and full-hearted commitment? There is no punishment, division, or rejection in God. To ponder this mystery is to come to know ourselves as loved by God. As we come to know and accept ourselves as loved by God, we come to know God through a new and living relationship with Jesus. In the grace of conversion, healing and freedom happens. Old wounds, fears, and guilt fall away in the encounter and experience of a God of love.

These are the central themes of the Advent season. People are looking for hope, meaning, and a purposeful way of life. This is reflected in the first reading in God's comfort and promise to the exiled Israelites. It is the plea and the longing of those who sought forgiveness in the words of John the Baptist. These themes are painfully evident in our culture today. In the chaos and social disorder of politics, peoples and nations, people are doubting God, Christianity, and even human civility. Why? We want what works, and with all the lies, deception, and active hate in the world people are inclined to give up on God. In recent years, 15 million Americans have left Christianity. Not just religious practice, but faith in a God of love under the premise that it just doesn't work. That is the lie of evil.

We need Advent as a time of hope, restoration, anticipation, and renewal in the coming of our Incarnate Savior. In this season of light, hope, and promise of Christ's coming, we must be reminded that you and I are the delivery system for Christ in the world. Believe in Jesus and the redemption he has assured us. Believe in the truth of Divine love. Make it personal to yourself. God's love for you is as personal and deep as the Father's love for Jesus. I am grateful beyond words for my life and vocation as a priest. Thank you for joining us today. You are the source and the reason for the Word and Sacrament of God's love I am privileged to serve. Please pray for God's will for this troubled world. Let us pray for each other.

Father John Esper

Liturgical Schedule

DAILY MASS

8:00am Monday thru Thursday

WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday - 4:00pm

Sunday - 9:00am

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturdays 3:00 - 3:45pm
in Adoration Chapel

Only one person allowed in chapel at a time. Persons seeking Sacrament of Reconciliation will be allowed in church to line up at 3:00pm

LIVE
STREAMING

Live Streaming of Mass
Monday thru Thursday 8:00am and
Sunday 9:00am

Adoration on Tuesdays
8:45am to Noon

Livestream of Rosary on Thursday
following Mass

Search for St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church (in Madison Heights) on youtube to find our channel or connect via our APP or website

Contact Information

ST VINCENT FERRER PARISH OFFICE

28353 Herbert St., Madison Heights, MI 48071
248-542-8720 Fax 248-542-8721
Website: www.stvincentferrer.net

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday
9am to Noon - 1:00pm to 4:30pm,
Friday 9-Noon
Closed Saturday & Sunday

Parish Office Staff

Reverend John C. Esper, Priest in Solidum
Deborah Tourville, Bus. Mgr/Adult Faith Formation
Sheryl Brown, Parish Secretary/Bulletin
Jim Balistreri, Music Coordinator
Mary Ann Przybysz, Evangelical Charity Coordinator/
Order of Christian Initiation of Adults(OCIA) Coordinator
Carl Copen, Facilities Supervisor
Alex Mototolea, Maintenance

Faith Formation Office

248-398-1743

Matthew Zinser, Childhood Faith Formation Coordinator

For information on Baptisms, OCIA and
Funerals contact the Parish Office 248-542-8720



MONDAY, December 11, 2023

8:00am Mass: Christopher Hudy (Special Intention) req. by Mom

TUESDAY, December 12, 2023

8:00am Mass: Paul Morello† req. by Dominick & Rosemary Lopez

WEDNESDAY, December 13, 2023

8:00am Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer

THURSDAY, December 14, 2023

8:00am Mass: Rimgaudas Svoba (26th R.A.) req. by Regina Juska-Svoba

SATURDAY, December 16, 2023

4:00pm Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer
Donna Dietrich† req. by Family

Peter Conway (Special Intention) req. by Mom
Ernest Szwarc† req. by Judith & William Marin

SUNDAY, December 17, 2023

9:00am Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer
Tina Berger† req. by Lopp Family

Giuseppe Miceli† req. by Virga Family

Joseph & Maria Thuy† req. by Ryan Vu Family

Barbara Merchelt† req. by Family

Paul Moreno† req. by Dominick & Rosemary Lopez



DECEMBER

Month of the
Immaculate Conception

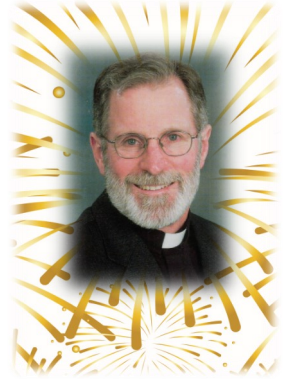
Readings for the Week

December 10

Sunday: Is 40:1-5, 9-11/Ps 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 (8)/2 Pt 3:8-14/Mk 1:1-8
Monday: Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14/Lk 5:17-26
Tuesday: Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab/Jdt 13:18bcde, 19/Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47
Wednesday: Is 40:25-31/Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10/Mt 11:28-30
Thursday: Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab/Mt 11:11-15
Friday: Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6/Mt 11:16-19
Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19/Mt 17:9a, 10-13
Next Sunday: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 (Is 61:10b)/ 1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

Congratulations Fr. John on Your 40th Anniversary of Ordination

*Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of Fr. John.
Through him, we experience your presence in the sacraments.
Continue to grant him wisdom, understanding, and strength.
Inspire him with the vision of your Kingdom.
Give him the words he needs to spread the Gospel.
Bless him with joy in his ministry.
Help him to continue being an instrument of your divine grace.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen.*
(Adapted from a prayer of St. John Vianney)



With gratitude, love and blessings from your parish family



Early Bulletin Deadline

**To have names of
deceased loved
ones included in
the Christmas
bulletin,
memorial flower
envelopes must
be returned by
**THIS MONDAY,
December 11th.****

UPCOMING EVENTS



**MON. DEC. 18 - 6:30pm
SVF CHURCH**

ALL ARE WELCOME

THIS WEDNESDAY



**DECEMBER 13
7PM**

**COMMUNAL
PENANCE
SERVICE**



**Tuesday,
December 19th
7:00-8:00pm
SVF Church**

Meditations to listen to and ponder during these hours of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament are available at : <https://www.iamhere.org/advent>.

These meditations are designed to guide you through Eucharistic adoration so that you can encounter Jesus in your life in a deeper and more meaningful way... speak heart-to-heart with Jesus and rest in his presence.

Come & Spend Time With Jesus

ADORERS NEEDED



During Advent, hours for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Tuesdays, December 12 & 19 are being extended until Noon.

We need people to commit to keeping Jesus company during those hours. Sign-up alongside the chapel wall by the Herbert Street entrance.

Hosts Needed for Traveling Vocations Chalice



Individuals and families are needed to host the Traveling Vocations Chalice for a one week commitment to pray for vocations to the priesthood. Sign up sheets are at the table outside the chapel wall near the Herbert door entrance.



...all government leaders to seek wisdom in finding a peaceful solution to world tensions.

...medical and humanitarian

aid for those suffering from hardship due to catastrophic weather, fires, floods, wars, earthquakes and disasters. ...the safety of men and women dedicated to protecting lives and freedom.

...the homeless, the addicted and all who are suffering physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

...all who are sick, homebound, undergoing or recovering from surgery, medical procedures, treatments or testing, and those who have made specific prayer requests:

Kathy Yates
Marty Karolski
Mary Guaiana
Katie Williams
Barbara Smith
Alice Palardy
Bernadette Gutowski
Delia Camarillo
Samantha Mosier

Tony Szeliga
Cheryl Horvath
Mary Jo Miles
Aurora Bionson
Jean Pietraszewski
Dianne Karolski
Linda & Kevin Ballantine
Christina Giascone

To be added to the prayer list or remain on it after 4 weeks, please call the parish office at 248-542-8720.

Observances for the Week

Sunday: 2nd Sunday of Advent
Monday: St. Damasus I, Pope
Tuesday: Our Lady of Guadalupe
Wednesday: St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
Thursday: St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church
Next Sunday: 3rd Sunday of Advent

De-stress For the Holidays

'Tis the season to be busy! There are gifts to buy, meals to make, decorations to be hung, concerts, events, and places to go and people to see. What if our focus was on being present, forgiving, and gratitude? The result will be less stress.

In our society we tend to totally miss the moment we are in. A lot of stress/anxiety is experienced when we tend to be focused on the past or worry about the future. This year take some quiet time and be mindful of every breathe you take and ask yourself where you saw God today. Perhaps it is the design of a snowflake or the kindness of the stranger. Try really listening and being present to your friends and family. "Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future and today is a gift-that is why they call it the present".

Free yourself from bitterness, grudges, anger, and resentment. Practicing forgiveness is the only way to peace of mind. Decide to choose forgiveness, love, and compassion. Internalizing anger can lead to health problems physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Forgiveness is not forgetting but it helps us see the past in a different way and allows us to heal through the grace of God. Take some time this Christmas to assess the status of your inner peace. "To err is human, to forgive is divine."

Medical research is beginning to show a correlation between positive attitudes and the healthy impact it has on life. Studies indicate that our brain chemistry releases endorphins and boosts our immune system when we laugh, exercise, and maintain a positive outlook on life. This year take some time to listen to your internal voices. Tell God your desire to have an attitude of gratitude. Feed your inner spirit with good things- the joy of music, art, dance, and nature. Be aware of God's daily grace.

'Tis the season to be still. Take a deep breath, quite down, reflect on your inner peace, be grateful, and focus on the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus.

Angela Maynard Parish Nurse

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK FOR REFLECTION

First Reading: Is 40:1-5, 9-11

The prophet Isaiah offers comfort and hope to the Israelites who were captive in Babylon in proclaiming that the glory of the Lord is returning to Israel. Do you have family or friends who could use words of encouragement from you?

Second Reading: 2 Pt 3:8-14

Peter speaks of being at peace while we wait for the promise of new heavens and a new earth when Christ returns. What gives you peace of mind these days?

Gospel: 2 Pt 3:8-14

Fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah, John the Baptist proclaimed the arrival of Jesus, "one mightier than I... (who) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Where do you sense the Holy Spirit present in your life?

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

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



Question: Is Our Lady of Guadalupe only a cultural devotion?

Answer: You may be familiar with Our Lady of Guadalupe from devotions in Hispanic communities. There is a rich heritage originating in Mexico, the site of the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. But Mary is for all of us! Our Lady of Guadalupe is, in fact, named the patroness of *all* the Americas, from the Chilean Patagonian mountains to the Arctic islands of Canada. After Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego as a young, mestizo woman, conversions to Catholicism began to grow exponentially throughout Latin America. Our Lady of Guadalupe has been meaningful to the Mexican people, and her image and devotions have been incorporated as broader symbols of culture.

This apparition inspires across lines of nationality and culture. Juan Diego, recipient of the apparition, was a poor laborer. The famous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe did not appear on silk or stone, but on the simple, natural woven fibers of Juan Diego’s tunic. The apparition affirms the dignity of the poor and shows striking solidarity. Mary appeared as the people appeared. In the apparition, Mary is indeed radiant, with the sun behind her and a cloak of stars around her. But her dress is simple, and she is pregnant. This apparition also reminds us of the sanctity of life and the need for life’s protection at all stages. Mary’s moving words to Juan Diego are words for us all: *“Am I not here who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms?”* ©LPI

HOLIDAY
Mass Schedule ©LPI

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Saturday, December 23, 2023 4:00pm
Sunday December 24, 2023 9:00am

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sunday, Dec. 24, 2023 - 4:00pm and 9:00pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

Monday, December 25, 2023 - 9:00am

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Saturday, December 30, 2023 - 4:00pm
Sunday, December 31, 2023 - 9:00am

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Monday, January 1, 2024 - 9:00am
(obligation suspended)

Ministry Schedule

December 16/17, 2023

Mass	4:00pm	9:00am
Sacristan	D Tourville	T Karolski
Reader #1	M Simmons	P Allen
Reader #2	D Tourville	T Karolski
EME	R Pasiak	L Yolkiewicz
	P Miles	C McCarthy
	M Simmons	M Black
Greeters	R Bertolini	M Bessler
	L Collins	P Rarus
	R Pasiak	N Oparka
	T Pasiak	T Oparka

Traveling Chalice Host beginning week of December 16/17
Peter Miles

Women’s Sacred Journey

SATURDAY, DEC. 16 - 9:00AM

**FAITH FORMATION OFFICE
SVF SCHOOL BLDG.**

All women in our Family of Parishes are invited to join other women to pray and reflect on Scripture passages.

The gathering is every other Saturday. No registration or fee required.

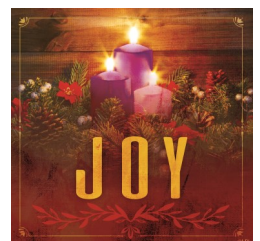


Third Sunday of Advent

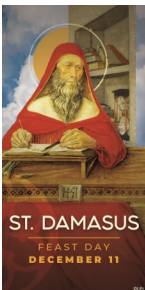
Lighting the Candle of

Saturday, December 16, 2023
4:00pm Mass: Tom & Terri Riley

Sunday, December 17, 2023
9:00am Mass: Gene & Sally Bosetti



GETTING TO KNOW OUR SAINTS...



SAINT DAMASUS | DECEMBER 11

Saint Damasus served as bishop of Rome for 18 years as Pope Damasus I (366-384). He had to endure significant controversy early in his pontifical reign when a factional group of bishops insisted that their chosen claimant, Ursinus, was the true pope. Both sides resorted to violence before the issue was decided in favor of Damasus. He went on to make the unification of the Church a central focus of his papacy and fervently fought to counter any division caused by the many heretical teachings of his time.

While he was pope, Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire and Rome's authority in the Church was decided by a synod that Damasus called in 382. This synod established Rome as the direct descendant of the Church founded by the apostle Saint Peter, the apostolic see, and put an end to confusion stemming from Constantinople, which some were already calling 'The New Rome'.

To further unify the Church, Damasus introduced Latin as the principle liturgical language and commissioned his secretary, Saint Jerome, to compile and revise the various translations of the Bible into one official translation to be used by the entire Church: The Latin Vulgate. This successfully preserved the original Scriptures by making them more accessible to the average Christian.

A writer and poet himself, Saint Damasus lives on in history through his many epigrams and verse inscriptions that can be found on the Roman catacombs that he restored during his papacy. Saint Jerome described his friend, Pope Damasus, as being "an incomparable person, learned in the Scriptures, a virgin doctor of the virgin Church, who loved chastity and heard its praises with pleasure."

ST. LUCY | FEAST DAY
DECEMBER 13

A name that means "light," St. Lucy (283 – 304) is the patron saint of those blind or suffering with eye trouble. Not much is known about her life, except that she was determined to remain a virgin and thus refused marriage. History tells the story of a frustrated suitor who eventually accused St. Lucy of being a Christian (a crime at the time), and she was executed in Syracuse,

Sicily, in the year 304.

Today, we celebrate a number of traditions that incorporate symbolic meaning of St. Lucy as the "bearer" of light in the darkness of winter. This is particularly seen in Scandinavian countries, with their long dark winters. There, a young girl dressed in a white dress and a red sash (as the symbol of martyrdom) carries palms and wears a crown or wreath of candles on her head. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, girls dressed as Lucy carry rolls and cookies in procession as songs are sung.

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FAMILIES
OF PARISHES

MASS SCHEDULES

National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica

2100 W. 12 Mile, Royal Oak, 48073

SATURDAY- 8:30am and
4:30pm (livestreamed)SUNDAY-7:30am, 9:30am (livestreamed), 11:30am
4:00pm (Spanish-livestreamed), and 6:00pmWEEKDAYS (Monday - Friday)
6:30am (livestreamed), 8:30am*St. Justin, St. Mary Magdalen*

1631 E. Elza Hazel Park, 48030 (St J)

50 E Annabelle Ave. Hazel Park, 48030 (St MM)

SATURDAY - 4:00pm - St. Justin

SUNDAY - 9:00am & 11:00am - St. Mary Magdalen

MON-WED & FRI- 9:00am - St. Justin

St. Mary

730 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak, 48067

SATURDAY - 4:30pm

SUNDAY - 9:00am, 11 am

MON, TUES, THURS, FRI - 7:30am

WED - 12:10pm

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS
DECEMBER 14

"Let us rejoice, O my Beloved!" December 14th is the feast of mystic, poet, and reformer, St. John of the Cross. St. Teresa of Avila enlisted his assistance in reforming the Carmelite order. The proposed reforms didn't go over well, and John was imprisoned. Rather than become discouraged or defiant, John turned to

prayer. His time in prison resulted in some of the greatest mystical poetry the Church has seen. After his escape, his efforts were recognized and honored by the Carmelites. While he was appointed to the highest office in his order, dissension forced him into solitude again. Following Christ isn't always easy, nor will it always be received well by everyone around us. John of the Cross teaches us that these challenges can be opportunities to unite ourselves closer to Jesus.

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The World Is Pregnant

by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

There is a character, Rose of Sharon, in John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* who is pregnant with her first child. As her impoverished family migrates from their native Oklahoma to California, Rose of Sharon’s all-consuming preoccupation is her unborn child. Everything she eats, every drink she lets pass her lips, every action she takes — none of it is done without thought for the child that is still so small as to make his mother’s expectancy barely discernible to the naked eye.

“For Rose of Sharon was pregnant,” wrote Steinbeck. “And the world was pregnant to her.”

It is the same for us Christians in the Advent season. We can feel a change coming, and the hope of this change consumes us. It shapes our actions and our plans, we feel it in our hearts and in our souls and in our limbs. From the food we eat to the clothing we wear to the words we use, the unseen Child lives and breathes and works in every small part of this blessed season.

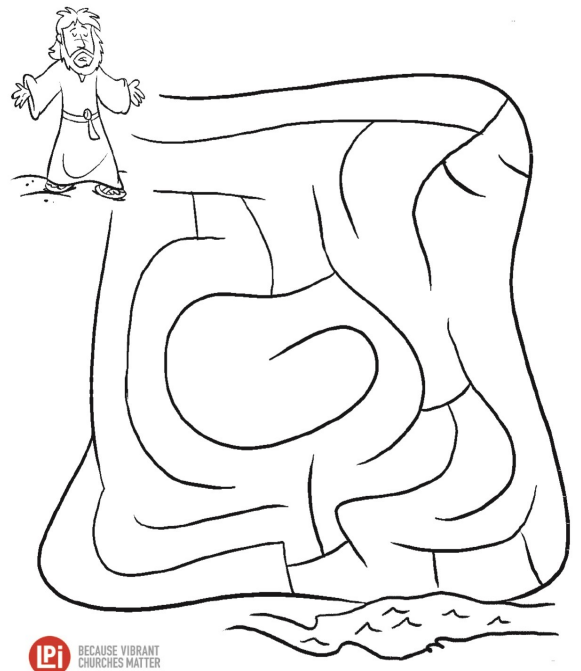
Even the commercial clamor that is the secular “Christmas holiday” cannot fully distract us from the holy sense of anticipation we have. We are baptized, and so it is inside of us, this voice that cries out in the desert. When we hear it, we cannot help but listen.

The Virgin is pregnant, and the world is pregnant to us.

“We await new heavens and a new earth in which Righteousness dwells.” — 2 Peter 3:13 ©LPi



Help John the Baptist find his way to the Jordan River.



We like to think we are totally free, but the bitter truth is we simply are not. Or better put, our freedom is limited on every side — by governments, corporate giants, physical and mental frailties, genetic shortcomings, and even the boundaries of time and space, and above all, the burden of our sins and pending deaths. In our day, we are perhaps particularly aware that we are not free to disconnect from the technocratic rulers of the air. If you doubt me, try not paying your internet bill and see what happens. We are not totally free.

It’s nothing new, of course. In Jesus’ day, everyone felt the crushing weight of the Roman Empire. You can say you’re free all you want. But try not paying your taxes to Rome and see what happens.

Once we feel this burden in our own lives — however it comes — we are ready to hear the stunning announcement that commences Mark’s gospel, “**The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**” It’s not a simple perfunctory introduction, but a dramatic announcement of new freedom. The word “gospel” was a political, even military, term. It meant: a great victory has been won and a new king is in charge. This Jesus — not the Roman emperor — is God’s son, and he has defeated all that crushes human freedom. It’s time to follow him and be truly free. This week let’s refuse to submit our freedom to false rulers — especially that of sin. And let’s rejoice that Christ is coming to make us perfectly free from all our oppressors.

— Father John Muir ©LPi

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GIVING - WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 2/3

Fiscal Year 7-1-23 to 6-30-24	Budgeted	Actual	Over/Under	YTD
Offertory Env. Used & e-fund participants	245	14		
Offertory (including loose cash)	\$ 5,293.00	\$ 1,013.25		
Energy	289.00	\$35.00		
Other: Coffee & Donuts, Flowers, Memorial Trees, Candles	\$ 1,115.39	188.00		
Mass Intentions	n/a	10.00		
AOD Collections:	n/a			
Holy Days: Immaculate Conception	n/a	70.00		
Budget deficit donations		55.00		
Thanksgiving Basket		50.00		