

St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

Madison Heights, MI www.stvincentferrer.net

DECEMBER 17. 2023 † THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

From The Pastor

We are so blest to be people of faith. Faith is God's gift that the believer accepts and allows to grow. Faith is intended for all who seek the way and the truth of love revealed in Christ. Advent highlights the gift of faith in those who prepare and celebrate the birth of Jesus even hold great hope in his second coming.

Moving into the second half of Advent with a ready anticipation for the feast of Christmas, consider your faith and its meaningful impact on your life. It may be more effective to consider your life without Christ. What if there was no Jesus? What if there was no Incarnation, no Mary Mother of our Savior, no Cross, death, or Resurrection; no redemption, forgiveness of sin, or promise of heaven? Seems almost inconceivable, doesn't it? The world without question would be radically different. Human dignity and society would not be the same. If we as human beings are the pinnacle of existence and society, what would be our purpose and meaning? What would relationships look like? How would forgiveness or mercy be expressed? Praise God that Christ is the pinnacle and truth of our existence.

The third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. It is the Latin word for joy, or to rejoice. Why? Because there is a Savior, and there is an Incarnation, a Mother of God, a death, a rising, and eternal life. The gift of God in Christ is worthy of our joy which is exactly the intention and call of this 'Rejoice Sunday.'

Each of the readings today express an eternal hope with a lively expectation of a coming Messiah. Released from a time of exile, God seeks through the Prophet Isaiah to restore hope and faith in the promise of Divine fidelity. The images and symbols of the reading scream hope, joy, promise, abundance, liberation, and freedom. These are the very things people in captivity and oppression long for.

This prophecy of Isaiah was not only effective in his day but anticipates the coming of the Christ who will claim these very words at the inauguration of his public ministry. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me...He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, healing, liberation, and release to those bound, to announce a year of favor in the vindication of our God.'

This is a word of salvation built on the promise of God now fulfilled in the birth of Christ the Lord. It is a call to rejoice and feel the joy of the Lord in every human soul. This is what we long for in the reality of Christ whose birth we are soon to commemorate. Do you, or can you claim this word of God for yourself as

a follower of Jesus? Through Baptism, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you and me, and each of us in turn are called to serve the works of the Kingdom as modeled by Jesus. Claim these words with joy and hope through active participation in Christ.

The heart of Advent is hope, promise, and joy given in the coming of our Savior. The core of Christian prayer is gratitude and praise with worship and rejoicing in the Lord our God who has come to save us. St. Paul is very clear. 'Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing, give thanks in every circumstance.' Why? Because we are the beneficiaries of the Word Made Flesh, freely given by God in the promise of mercy, acceptance, forgiveness, and new life in Christ.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and John the Baptist are major players in this joyous season. Mary's gift was her yes to God on behalf of all humanity and creation. Mary embraced God's Word as the Mother of our Savior. Mary knew who she was as a believer in God with every hope in the coming of the Messiah. For each of us, Mary humbly surrendered herself to the Divine plan.

Humility is also a core response of John as he served as preparer for the coming Messiah. John knew his role and accepted it. John calls us to the light of faith in readiness to see and accept the Savior when he comes. John considers himself nothing compared to the One who is to come. "Who are you?" "I am not the Christ." "Who are you?" "I am a voice crying out...' Make straight the way of the Lord." Even in his call for repentance and a change of heart, John held a certain joy and excited anticipation at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Believing in Jesus is to honor John who prepared his way. John would deflect the honor and point to Jesus as a greater man in the Holy Spirit.

In these next two weeks, consciously attend to a spirit of gratitude, praise, and rejoicing in the Lord. Ponder who you are in Christ and what salvation means to you. Through the birth, life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus our lives are radically different. In Christ, we are people of light and witnesses of the gospel we profess. The journey and witnesse of the Christian gospel is not always easy, but for people in the Spirit it creates joy, secures hope, and inspires love. 'Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. Your kindness should be known to all. Have no anxiety, at all, but in everything pray, petition, and offer thanksgiving, making your needs known to God.' Phil. 4: 4-6.

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 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



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 18, 2023

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

TUESDAY, December 19, 2023

8:00am Mass: Deceased parishioners who did not have a Funeral Mass

WEDNESDAY, December 20, 2023

8:00am Mass: Dianne Karolski† reg. by John &

Bernadette Turchin

THURSDAY, December 21, 2023

8:00am Mass: Fr. John Esper (Thanks & Blessings on 40th Ordination Anniversary) req. by John & Bernadette Turchin

SATURDAY, December 23, 2023

4:00pm Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer Peter Conway (Special Intention) req. by Mom Paul Morello† req. by Dominick & Rosemary Lopez Joseph & Margaret Sanocki† req. by Family

SUNDAY, December 24, 2023

9:00am Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer

William Olszewski† req. by Family Mike Kapolka† req. by Wife & Son

Joseph & Maria Manh† req. by Ryan Vu Family Joseph & Maria Thuy† req. by Ryan Vu Family Lorraine Kuczborski† req. by Family



The Parish Office will close at noon this Friday, December 22nd and will reopen in the New Year on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Readings for the Week

December 17

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

Monday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19/Mt

1:18-25

Tuesday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab,

16-17/Lk 1:5-25

Wednesday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/Lk

1:26-38

Thursday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3,

11-12, 20-21/Lk 1:39-45

Friday: 1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7,

8abcd/Lk 1:46-56

Saturday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10

and 14/Lk 1:57-66

Next Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5,

27, 29 (2a)/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38



All are invited

to join in a sing along of Christmas carols as the Faith Formation students portray events of the Nativity. Light refreshments follow.

THIS MONDAY
DECEMBER 18 - 6:30pm
SVF CHURCH

Why do we believe in Jesus and the Catholic Church? Why should we continue to do so? We've never seen him face-to-face (at least not most of us, I assume). Most of us have never had mystical visions of angels or saints. We live in the same world as our atheist and secularists friends. Why do we believe in Christ if we've never seen him?

The simple, symbolic answer the Gospel presents to us this week might surprise us: we believe because of John the Baptist. Early in John's Gospel we hear: "There was a man sent from God, his name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him." The Baptist powerfully announces Jesus. This is a historical fact, and it is also now a pattern at work in our lives.

John the Baptist stands for the entirety of the old covenant, everything entrusted to the Jewish people. And yet he prophetically opens the door to something entirely new in Jesus, to the revival and fulfillment of God's promises. In every generation, and in every human life, God continues to do this. He has done it through people named Augustine, Francis, Catherine, Theresa, and countless others. In my life, the Baptist's spirit has come through persons named Eric, Paul, Mary, and Ron. I challenge you to name at least three people through whom God has announced the coming of Jesus in your life. Consciously thank God for their testimony. And let's commit ourselves to listening to the spirit of John the Baptist testify again this week so that we might more strongly believe in the light. — Father John Muir



This Tuesday, December 19th Eucharistic Adoration

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/come-and-see. download *Hallow*, the #1 Catholic App.

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



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)

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP & SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Saturday, December 23, 2023 at 9am in the Faith Formation Office in School



The men's fellowship group gathers for a scripture reflection/sharing every other Saturday. All men are welcome.

INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

God sends a John the Baptist into every person's life — someone who prepares His way, who calls out His truth. Look for the John the Baptist in your life. Pray you can be this person for someone else.



Photos From the Advent Tea - Dec 3rd

It was a relaxing afternoon, reflecting on the Blessed Mother and socializing at the Advent Tea. Baby items that were donated went to a local pregnancy center in Madison Heights.



















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.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK FOR REFLECTION

First Reading: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11

Isaiah rejoices over God's call in his life and the promise of restoration for all nations. As we continue in the season of Advent, what has brought some joy to you or your family?

Second Reading: 1 Thes 5:16-24

Paul encourages the Thessalonians to be people of prayer and joy, open to the work of the Holy Spirt in their lives. Is there anything recently that has brought you joy?

Gospel: Jn 1:6-8, 19-28 Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

John presents the religious leaders of Jerusalem as puzzled and uncertain as to who John the Baptist was. How do you approach friends or family in your life who are confused or questioning the faith?





...all government leaders to seek wisdom in finding peaceful solutions to world wars and tensions.

...medical and humanitarian aid for those suffering from hardship due to catastrophic weather, fires, wars, floods. 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.

Lord Jesus.

You are the Divine Physician and Healer. To You, we lift up in prayer all who are lonely, homeless, sick or addicted; all who are unemployed or underemployed; all who are anxious or depressed and all who are suffering in any way spiritually, physically or emotionally. In their pain and brokenness, we ask that you bring them the comfort of your loving presence. In You, may they find strength for the day and hope for the journey. Amen

Observances for the Week

3rd Sunday of Advent Sunday:

Thursday: St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor

of the Church

St. John of Kanty, Priest Saturday:

Next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve

FOURTH Sunday of Advent Lighting the Candle of

Saturday, December 23, 2023 4:00pm Mass: Needed

Sunday, December 24, 2023 9:00am Mass: Debbie Tourville



WHY DO WE DO THAT? CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED

THE SIGN OF PEACE

Question: Why do Catholics give the sign of peace to one another at Mass?

Answer: The sign of peace is a part of the Mass that takes place immediately after we offer the Lord's Prayer. Inspired by the Jesus' words to his first followers, we stand together in a spirit of communion to pray as Jesus taught us: "Our Father who art in heaven..." In this prayer, we call for the coming of God's kingdom in all its fullness and ask that God provides for our needs — "Give us, this day, our daily bread" — to forgive our sins and to bring us to the joy of heaven.

It is almost natural, then, that the rite of peace would follow. As the celebrant prays that Christ's peace will fill our hearts, our communities, the Church, and the whole world, we extend to those around us a sign of peace as a symbol of the communion that we experience now and will experience forever in the fullness of the reign of God.

We are also reminded of Jesus' teachings that if we are at prayer and remember that a brother or sister is holding something against us, then we are to go and seek reconciliation with them before we continue our prayer (see Matthew 5:23). And so, the sign of peace also reminds us of the need to truly be in communion — united in love and peace — with God and one another before we approach the altar to receive the Eucharist.

So, the next time you're at Mass and the time comes for the sign of peace, remember that this is a moment to celebrate the gift of Christ's peace that each of us has received from God and to pass that peace along to those around us. We need this moment to practice, because this is also the same peace of Christ that we are instructed to carry out into the world at the end of Mass when the priest or deacon says to us, "Go, in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

extends its deepest sympathy and support to the family and friends of

Dianne Karolski

the faithful departed in your prayers.

May all the deceased be welcomed into paradise!

Ministry Schedule

December 23/24, 2023

December 23/24, 2023				
Mass	4:00pm	9:00am		
Sacristan	T Riley	L Yolkiewicz		
Reader #1	P Miles	A Goll		
Reader #2	T Riley	L Yolkiewicz		
EME	T Riley	A Goll		
	M Simmons	R Grant		
	P Miles	M Waskowski		
Greeters	L Collins	S Bosetti		
	R Bertolini	T Lane		
	R Juska-Svoba	B Turchin		
	P Miles	J Turchin		

Traveling Chalice Host beginning week of December 23/24
Michelle Waskowski

Ministry Schedule

Christmas Masses December 24/25, 2023

		<u> </u>	
Mass	4:00pm-eve	9:00pm-eve	9:00am-day
Sacristan	T Riley	D Tourville	T Karolski
Reader #1	J McCown	P Allen	C McCarthy
Reader #2	M Kairis	D Gray	T Karolski
EME	P Miles	P Allen	M Black
	R Grant	D Gray	A Goll
	M Waskowski	M Simmons	C McCarthy
Greeters	L Collins	S Bosetti	R Juska-Svoba
	R Bertolini	T Lane	M McLaughlin
	P Miles	Volunteer	D McLaughlin
	Volunteer	D Vu	M Bessler

CATHOLIC TRIVIA – JUST FOR FUN

Question: What are the only materials acceptable for use as an altar cloth? ©LPi

Answer: Hemp or flax

GETTING TO KNOW OUR SAINTS...



VENERABLE FULTON JOHN SHEEN

Fulton John Sheen was born in El Paso, Illinois, on May 8, 1895. As a child, Sheen was known for his intelligence and his love of learning. He was also an active member of his church and embraced his faith at a young age.

In 1913, Sheen enrolled at St. Viator College in Bourbonnais, Illinois, where he studied philosophy and theology. He was ordained a priest in 1919 and began his ministry in Peoria, Illinois. Sheen quickly gained a reputation as an eloquent speaker and an effective evangelist. He easily connected with those he served, and people were drawn to his charisma.

From 1927 until 1950, Sheen served as a professor of theology and philosophy at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He also became a popular Catholic radio personality, hosting a weekly program called "The Catholic Hour." Sheen used his platform to promote Catholic teachings, defend the faith, and encourage others on their faith journey.

He continued to use the media to spread his message and, in 1951 he expanded into the world of television with a TV show he hosted called "Life is Worth Living." The show was a hit and helped to make Sheen a household name. It ran until 1957 making him one of the first televangelists. He also authored more than 70 books. His most famous work is "Life of Christ," a bestselling book that has been translated into multiple languages.

In 1966, Sheen was appointed bishop of Rochester, New York and, in 1969 he was made the archbishop of the titular see of Newport, Wales. During his time as a bishop, he hosted "The Fulton Sheen Program," was featured on the cover of Time Magazine, and won two Emmy Awards for Most Outstanding Television Personality.

Bishop Sheen died in 1979 at the age of 84 after enduring some years of health issues and surgeries. He passed while in prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

In 2012, Bishop Sheen's cause for sainthood was opened by the Catholic Church. In 2019, Pope Francis approved a miracle attributed to Sheen's intercession and he was declared Venerable.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen's life and work continue to inspire people around the world. His emphasis on the power of the media to spread the Gospel and his unwavering commitment to Catholicism have made him a beloved figure in the Church. In addition to his media work and writing, Sheen was known for his humility and his devotion to prayer. He once said, "The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white host."



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 6:00pm WEEKDAYS (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



"The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white host."

Venerable Fulton Sheen

Prayer for Canonization of Bishop Sheen

Heavenly Father, source of all holiness, You raise up within the Church in every age men and women who serve with heroic love and dedication. You have blessed Your Church through the life and ministry of Your faithful servant, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. He has written and spoken well of Your Divine Son, Jesus Christ, and was a true instrument of the Holy Spirit in touching the hearts of countless people.

If it be according to Your will, for the honor and glory of the Most Holy Trinity and for the salvation of souls, we ask You to move the Church to proclaim him a saint. We ask this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Prayer Source: https://celebratesheen.com/prayers-2/



A CONSTANT COMPANION

As Christians, we are called to a life of prayer. This is not just during seasons like Advent, but all year long. When we talk about being prayerful everyday stewards, we are speaking about cultivating an awareness of God being with us at all times. Each day we begin by offering God the entirety of our day. Each night we rest in Him and hope that the hours that passed gave Him glory.

During this busy time of Advent, it is hard to cultivate this life of prayer, but without it we can too easily lose sight of the reason for the season. It is during this time of year we need to heed the words of St. Paul more than ever when he wrote to the Thessalonians, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing." This is how we will be able to avoid the pitfalls of consumerism and secularism and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Bring Jesus with you into the office Christmas party. Take him with you shopping for gifts in the department store. Be aware of him when you sit down to watch television specials you have seen every year of your life. Give him all your time and let his presence fill your every moment. By striving to be connecting with Jesus at all times, you will bear greater fruit and the joy you experience will be much greater than you could imagine. You might even spend a few less dollars and spend more time with those you love, particularly the one who loves you the most, the Incarnation himself.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS ©LPi

Testimony

by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

When my grandmother heard the news that my cousin had fallen from a second-story window, she immediately went and washed her hair.

Grandma had been sitting alone in her house, listening to the morning radio when the announcer shared a news bulletin stating that the previous night, a little boy with the same name as her grandson, living in the same community and of the same age, had fallen onto the pavement from a window on the second floor of his house. He had been rushed to the hospital but miraculously survived his injuries.

She thought she was hallucinating and wanted to look pretty when the "men in white coats" came to take her away. Thus, the hair-washing.

As it happens, the whole story was true — it was her grandson, but this was before the age of mobile phones and had happened so late at night that his parents had been unable to notify any family members before the whole thing showed up on the news.

It wasn't until my grandmother received a phone call from another relative corroborating the story that she realized it hadn't been a figment of her imagination. What a waste of styled hair, no hospital committal for her that day.

There are certain truths that we cannot accept unless they are supported by the testimony of others. We find them to be unbelievable without the reassurance of another person whispering, "It's okay. I see it, too."

This is the value of testimony, and the purpose of John the Baptist and every saint who ever died with the name of Jesus Christ on their lips. And this is the sacred duty of all the baptized, to give testimony with our words and our actions.

How will you testify today?

"He was not the light, but came to testify to the light." —
John 1:8

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