

CHRISTMAS  
2023



AND THE WORD  
BECAME FLESH AND  
MADE HIS DWELLING  
AMONG US.

JOHN 1:14

©LPi

St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church

28353 Herbert St., Madison Heights, MI 48071 - 248-542-8720 [www.stvincentferrer.net](http://www.stvincentferrer.net)

Reverend John C. Esper



*“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”*

John 1:14

## From The Pastor

Seeking and savoring. We seek and long for things we feel we need and want, perceiving we do not have them. Savoring is realizing and treasuring what we have longed for with deep gratitude and love. In worldly ways we seek things we believe will make us happy and secure. We savor things which give us pleasure or meaningful peace. Love and faith, food and friendship come to mind.

Spiritual seeking and savoring are different. Spiritually, we seek knowledge and understanding of the presence of God. We seek God’s favor and blessing. We seek with hope the fulfillment of all God promises. To spiritually savor is to ponder, value, and love the things we have received and experienced from God. Savoring is a deeply felt experience of sitting with God’s love.

Advent is for seeking while Christmas is for savoring. In the frame of the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Mary seeks to understand the mystery of God’s Word to her through the Angel. Mary believes with ardent hope in the coming Messiah. Her life is fully identified with God. Her heart and soul are seeking to know and do God’s will. In her body, she must hold the mystery of a pregnancy by the Holy Spirit who will be called the Son of God.

This is spiritual seeking at its finest. Mary deeply desires God and wants to do God’s will. Yet, she is perplexed and troubled by the unknowing of God’s plan. In one way or another, that describes all of us. We are all seeking God with varying degrees of both hope and consternation. Advent is for longing, hoping, and waiting for Divine promises to be fulfilled.

Christmas is for savoring. Christmas savoring has many faces that hold different meanings but point to the same source. On one level, I can say that I am able to readily savor the memories of Christmas past. It is a lived and felt experience. As a child, I remember the mystery and grace of the crib my Dad always built in the fireplace. The manger scene, the angels, Mary and the baby Jesus, cows and donkeys, and the angel at the peak of the crib. I remember the Christmas lights, like the manger, as having more meaning than for putting light in the room. They held and expressed a mystery beyond themselves. Piles of presents, making Christmas cookies, turkey for dinner, with favored relatives for company. These were days to savor not only for the fun and the goodies, but because they spoke of and relayed a mystery. You can only savor a cookie, or turkey and gravy for so long. The crib and the newborn baby who would be the Savior you can ponder forever. This side of Christmas was an easy

entry point of experience for a maturing adult faith.

Another way to savor Christmas is to realize and accept the deepest longings of humanity fulfilled in the birth of the child Jesus. We savor because what we have so long desired is now with us. It is one thing to know the details of the story, and quite another to realize and deeply embrace what it means for us. God has come to earth and is already here. God is with us in real and personal ways. Redemption is now accomplished in the infant child who became the adult Christ. We have freedom now from the disorder of sin and the fear of death. Jesus, the longed-for Christ, has died to defeat sin and death and he is now alive and living in every one of us. This is the reality and gift of Christmas now fulfilled in God’s gift of our salvation.

Prayer is a good place to discover and awaken to this mystery of the Christian truth. Prayer is the place to ponder and experience in deep and confirming ways what Christmas means and what is now fully ours in the Lord Jesus. The deepest and most precious gift of prayer is to allow ourselves to feel the embrace of the Lord Jesus with and within us. Prayer is the time and place to surrender to the love God freely gives to us in the Lord Jesus. Once this experience is known, savoring begins. You will not feel this deep love every time you pray, but you will remember the experience of when you did deeply experience God’s love. That is why we savor. We recall the encounter and we sit with it in the same way I might ponder the crib in the fireplace, or the cookies, or company on Christmas. It is all of the same piece as it relays different edges of the same mystery.

Take some time to pray with your Christmas memories. They might be like Mary’s seeking and pondering in troubled ways the mystery of God’s plan. Not all memories will be friendly or peaceful. It was like this for Mary too. Deep faith carried Mary through the sorrow and confusion of a mystery that offered much pain as well as great joy. In both pain and joy seeking and suffering meet.

As you pray, savor the great gift you have been given along with all humanity and creation. Your time will be well spent. Savoring takes quiet and listening. It is not seeking and digging. It is surrendering, realizing, and accepting that your redemption has already been accomplished. It will become more real when you surrender to the experience of being loved by the infant child who became the adult Christ. Jesus lives in you and you live in Jesus.

Merry Christmas.

Father John Esper

**LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

**DAILY MASS**

8:00am Monday thru Thursday

**WEEKEND MASSES**

Saturday - 4:00pm

Sunday - 9:00am

Church doors open 1/2 hour before Mass begins

**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  
**No Adoration December 26**

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**

**The Parish Office is closed and will reopen in the New Year on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.**

**HOLIDAY Mass Schedule**

**CHRISTMAS EVE**

Sunday, December 24, 2023 - 4:00pm & 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)



**HEALING MASS**  
**NEXT SATURDAY**  
**DECEMBER 30, 2023 - 4:00pm**

Fr. John will administer the Sacrament of the Sick after Mass. Prayer teams will be available for individual prayer.

**Anointing of the Sick**

# READINGS FOR THE WEEK

December 24

- Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3,4-5, 27, 29/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38
- Monday: *Vigil:* Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 *Night:* Is 9:1-6/Ps 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14 *Dawn:* Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/ Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20 *Day:* Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
- Tuesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22
- Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
- Thursday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8/ Mt 2:13-18
- Friday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6/Lk 2:22-35
- Saturday: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10/Lk 2:36-40
- Next Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6,8-9/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



**SUNDAY, December 24, 2023 CHRISTMAS EVE**

- 4:00pm Mass: Ron Sadowski† req. by Nancy Sadowski
- Kathy Boguslawski† req. by Family
- SVF Parish Staff req. by Mary Ann Przybysz
- Tresa & John Lamerato† req. by The Sam Lamerato Family
- Charles & Frances Ray† req. by The Sam Lamerato Family
- 9:00pm Mass: Christopher Hudy (Special Intention) req. by Mom

**MONDAY, December 25, 2023 CHRISTMAS DAY**

- 9:00am Mass: Scarchilli Family req. by Giszczaks
- Joseph Dong Kim Pham† req. by Family
- Robert Shaner (Memorial Birthday) req. by Family
- Janet Trabucchi† req. by Kevin & Family
- Robert Lebioda† req. by Kim Magri & Family
- Jessica Magri† req. by Kim Magri & Family
- Michael Magri† req. by Kim Magri & Family
- Lorraine Kuczborski† req. by Family

**TUESDAY, December 26, 2023**

8:00am Mass: The Families of Parishioners

**No Adoration following Mass today**

**WEDNESDAY, December 27, 2023**

8:00am Mass: Reverend Thomas Espert† req. by Family

**THURSDAY, December 28, 2023**

8:00am Mass: Edward Gauronskas† req. by Daughter

**SATURDAY, December 30, 2023 HOLY FAMILY**

4:00pm Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer  
Theresa Cremen-Polonis† req. by Mom & Brothers

**SUNDAY, December 31, 2023 HOLY FAMILY**

9:00am Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer  
Joseph & Maria Manh† req. by Ryan Vu Family  
Dianne Karolski† req. by Linda Karolski  
Lorraine Kuczborski† req. by Family



*all government leaders to seek wisdom in finding peaceful solutions 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:*

*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

- Sunday: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve
- Monday: The Nativity of the Lord
- Tuesday: St. Stephen, First Martyr
- Wednesday: St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
- Thursday: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
- Friday: St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr
- Sunday: The Holy Family; New Year's Eve ©LPI

## GRIEF SUPPORT SERIES IN 2024

St. Vincent Ferrer Parish is preparing to offer a 6 week grief support series that would provide a safe place for people in our parish who have experienced the loss of a significant person in their lives. This series will be facilitated by Judy McCown and Mike Kairis on Thursday mornings beginning on February 1, 2024 continuing to March 7, 2024 from 10am to 11:45am in the Administration Building Dining Hall. Registration in advance will be required. More information regarding the series and registration will be forthcoming.

## Women's Sacred Journey

**SATURDAY, DEC. 30 - 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.



# MEMORIAL FLOWER DONATIONS

<b>In Memory/Honor of</b>	<b>Donated by</b>	<b>In Memory/Honor of</b>	<b>Donated by</b>
My Dad	Miss Maria Adragna	Jessica Magri	M/M Richard Magri
Edward & Elizabeth Gauronskas	M/M Dan Ager	Michael Magri	M/M Richard Magri
Cindy Bertolini	Mr. Ron Bertolini	Robert Lebioda	M/M Richard Magri
Fred Biber	Mrs. Erna Biber	Felix & Veronika Malolepszy	Mr. Jerome Malolepszy
Klein Family	Mrs. Erna Biber	Wayne Maynard	Mrs. Angela Maynard
Our Parents	M/M Manuel Bionson	Catherine McCarthy	Ms. Corrine McCarthy
Patricia & Edward McHugh	Dan & Maureen Black	Deceased Perry Family	Ms. Corrine McCarthy
Helen, Rosemary Black	Dan & Maureen Black	Deceased McCarthy Family	Ms. Corrine McCarthy
Gerald Black	Dan & Maureen Black	Janine Kairis	McCown-Kairis Family
Helen Blizinski	M/M Kevin Blizinski	Jim McCown	McCown-Kairis Family
Kathy Boguslawski	Mr. Robert Boguslawski	Jaye Kairis	McCown-Kairis Family
M/M George McCarthy	M/M Eugene Bosetti	All deceased FamilyMembers	McCown-Kairis Family
M/M Sergio Bosetti	M/M Eugene Bosetti	Duane McLaughlin, Jr.	M/M Duane McLaughlin
Josephine Bosetti	M/M Eugene Bosetti	Rachel McLaughlin	M/M Duane McLaughlin
Robert Brunk	Mrs. Ann Brunk	Michael & Dorothy McLaughlin	M/M Duane McLaughlin
Donald Bush	Ms. Kathleen Bush	Walter & Emily Ostrom	M/M Duane McLaughlin
Richard & Helen Brzezinski	M/M Dennis Brzezinski	Thomas C. Moran	Pauline Moran
Walter & Ann Wiktorski	M/m Dennis Brzezinski	Daniel J. Moran	Pauline Moran
Jean Tabone	Ms. Nancy Cleveland	Joseph & Mary Novak	Mr. Joseph Novak, Jr.
Irene Ledesma	Ms. Nancy Cleveland	Gary J. Novak	Mr. Joseph Novak, Jr.
Richard Collins	Linda Collins	All Deceased Family & Friends	M/M Timothy Oparka
John & Elizabeth Cooper	Marie Cooper	Aloise & Irene Oparka	M/M Timothy Oparka
Jerome Cooper	Marie Cooper	Stephen & Hortense Farco	M/M Timothy Oparka
Gregorio Sr., Caridad, Dominador,	Ms. Asteria Diano	Frank & Janet Minish	M/M Stephen Orloski
Edgardo and Heide Diano	Ms. Asteria Diano	Linda, Al & Sharon Panek	Ms. Barbara Panek
Honorata Villarba, Petra Palenzuela	Mr. John Dietrich	Agnes Panek, Debra Millsap	Ms. Barbara Panek
Donna Dietrich	Mr. John Dietrich	Patricia Allen & Dennis Elie	Ms. Barbara Panek
Catherine and Frank Dietrich	Mr. John Dietrich	Tony & Nancy Giardina	Richard & Antoinette Pasiak
James and Trudy Dietrich	Mr. John Dietrich	Richard, Sr. & Norma Pasiak	Richard & Antoinette Pasiak
Leonard & Lydia Ernatt	Gerald & Michele Ernatt	Gary Pasiak	Richard & Antoinette Pasiak
Flack & Miller Families	M/M Paul Flack	Joe & Barbara Fontana	Richard & Antoinette Pasiak
John & Stella Gadowski	Ms. Patricia Gadowski	John Giardina & Nancy Tighe	Richard & Antoinette Pasiak
Mary Ann Machota	Ms. Patricia Gadowski	Alex Pawloski	Mrs. Bernice Pawloski
Matthew Machota	Ms. Patricia Gadowski	Ida Glasa	Mrs. Bernice Pawloski
Aro J. Gallerani	Mrs. Genevieve Gallerani	Jack & Prue Rizzo	Bill & Pauline Petterson
Guc & Kutche Families	Mrs. Mary Jane Guc	Merle & Annette Petterson	Bill & Pauline Petterson
Gerald Gutowski	Mrs. Bernadette Gutowski	Ploskonka & Shannon Families	M/M Ronald Ploskonka
M/M L. Vertel, Sr.	Mrs. Bernadette Gutowski	Gigi Cooper	LeRoy & Linda Proszkowski
M/M E. Gutowski	Mrs. Bernadette Gutowski	SSG Jason Plumb	LeRoy & Linda Proszkowski
Michael Higgins	Mrs. Krystyna Higgins	Bill Rearick	Mrs. JoAnn Rearick
Dr. & Mrs. S. Grace	George & Gail Iapalucci	Krystle Rearick	Mrs. JoAnn Rearick
Maggie Iapalucci	George & Gail Iapalucci	Joseph & Elizabeth Grenke	Mrs. JoAnn Rearick
Stefanija & Pranas Juska	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Joe & Joan Rickle	M/M Joseph Rickle
Elena & Marcus Maulding	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Tom & Dorothy Peacock	M/M Joseph Rickle
Jonas, Jonana & Rimgaudas Svoba	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Tommy Peacock	M/M Joseph Rickle
Milda Svoba-Walters	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Deceased Riley Family Members	M/M Thomas Riley
Kristina Maulding Lempicki	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Deceased Fletcher Family Members	M/M Thomas Riley
Valentina & Rimantas Labieka	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Kuzma Family	Ms. Nancy Sadowski
Jonas Vytautas Ruzgys	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Sadowski Family	Ms. Nancy Sadowski
Parishioners of St. Anthony	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Robert J. Shaner	Mrs. Barbara Shaner
Lithuanian Church	Ms. Regina Juska-Svoba	Robert P. Abratowski	Mrs. Barbara Shaner
Mike Kapolka	Mrs. Helen Kapolka	Shonts Family	Mrs. Dorothy Shonts
Fred Karolski	Mrs. Linda Karolski	Stella & Louis Flanz	Mrs. Mary Ann Simmons
Joseph & Audrey Krieger	M/M John Krieger	Peter & David Stema	Mrs. Mary Lou Stema
M/M Tom Kronner	M/M Ken Kronner	Schuster grandparents	Mrs. Mary Lou Stema
Lorraine Kuczborski	Mr. Stanley Kuczborski	Steve Mall, Barbra Sells	Mrs. Mary Lou Stema
Deceased Lamerato Family Members	M/M Samuel Lamerato	Elizabeth Milostan	M/M Jeffrey Swanson
Deceased Ray Family Members	M/M Samuel Lamerato	Mary Ann Balok	M/M Jeffrey Swanson
Linda Lane	Ms. Theresa Lane	Cheryl Swanson	M/M Jeffrey Swanson
Stanley & Millie Sova	M/M Gary Lentini	Darlene Berent	M/M Jeffrey Swanson

**In Memory/Honor of**

Nick Szczerba  
 Helen Szczerba  
 Szeliga & Lebioda Families  
 Ernest Szwarc  
 Family & Friends  
 Pedro & Leonora Tagalicud, Sr.  
 Henry Tagalicud Sr.  
 Family & Friends  
 Guillermo and Filomena Usita  
 Brigido Usita  
 Glicerio & Joel Usita  
 Delores Van Hall  
 Anna & Izador Stanislawski  
 Deceased Miceli Family  
 Deceased Virga Family  
 Kolton Swanson  
 Inge Waller  
 Marion Koerber  
 Sam & Antoinette Gusmano  
 Boris & Natalie Waskowski  
 Yolkiewicz Family Members  
 Celmer Family Members  
 Deceased Mankowski Family Members  
 Deceased Zukowski Family Members

**Donated by**

Mr. Thomas Szczerba  
 Mr. Thomas Szczerba  
 M/M Anthony Szeliga  
 Mrs. Charlotte Szwarc  
 Ann Kresowski & John Tata  
 Fely Tagalicud  
 Fely Tagalicud  
 Ms. Barbara Thomson  
 Florecita Usita  
 Florecita Usita  
 Florecita Usita  
 Mr. Raymond Van Hall  
 Ms. Frances Vettraino  
 M/M Francesco Virga  
 M/M Francesco Virga  
 M/M Don Waller  
 M/M Don Waller  
 M/M Don Waller  
 M & M Waskowski  
 M & M Waskowski  
 M/M Stanley Yolkiewicz  
 M/M Stanley Yolkiewicz  
 M/M Lawrence Zukowski  
 M/M Lawrence Zukowski

<b>Ministry Schedule</b>		
December 30/31, 2023		
Mass	4:00pm	9:00am
Sacristan	D Tourville	L Yolkiewicz
Reader #1	T Riley	A Goll
Reader #2	D Tourville	L Yolkiewicz
EME	T Riley	A Goll
	M Simmons	P Miles
	R Pasiak	M Waskowski
Greeters	L Collins	M Bessler
	R Bertolini	N Oparka
	R Juska-Svoba	T Oparka
	Volunteer	B Gutowski
<b>Traveling Chalice Host beginning week of December 30/31</b>		
Darren Gray		

**General Flower Donations**

Theresa Kowalski  
 M/M Bill Majewski  
 Mrs. Marilyn Myers  
 Daniel & Bernadette Ravary  
 M/M Don Vu  
 M/M Ryan Vu



Thank you to all who made memorial flower contributions to beautify our worship space.  
 The contribution total was \$ 2,132.00.

**ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT REQUEST**

We **WILL NOT** do a parish wide mailing of contribution statements. If you would like a copy of your 2023 contributions for income tax purposes, please fill out a request form found at the church entrance and drop it in the collection basket. Or call the parish office at 248-542-8720 after January 2, 2024.

**Please make request by January 15, 2024.**

**INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK**

God's plans are not always what we imagined.  
 Sometimes they make us hesitate.  
 Be like Mary. Say "Yes, Lord"  
 — and God will show you that His imagination is better than yours.

*News of Great Joy*  
 by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

I am not going to wish you a Merry Christmas. I have no problem with merriness, and I certainly hope you have your share of it today. May the frosting on your cookies be extra thick. May the lights of your tree be particularly twinkly. May the crackling of your fire be especially pleasant, and the places around your table filled by smiling loved ones. No, there is nothing wrong with being merry, especially on such a day.

But the angels did not bring news of great merriment. They brought news of great joy, and though our world often confuses the two, they are not the same thing.

Joy is harder to achieve than merriness, but it's easier to keep because it is far, far more durable. Joy can withstand the roughness of this earthly life in a way that merriness never could. Merriness cannot live in the hearts of people whose plans have been upended, whose futures have been rearranged and whose very lives are in danger. But joy certainly can.

Merriness doesn't follow from a long and uncertain journey, with no reassurances except the steadfast belief that you are doing the will of God. But joy does.

Merriness does not shiver in a stable or hang on a cross. But joy can, and it has.

May you have a truly joyful Christmas.

*"You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing..." — Isaiah 9:2*

**QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK FOR REFLECTION**

**First Reading:** Is 52:7-10

While in exile in Babylon, Isaiah foresaw and celebrated the time when Israel would declare, "All the ends of the earth can see the salvation of our God." How will you celebrate the birth of Jesus?

**Second Reading:** Heb 1:1-6

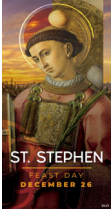
The opening verses of Hebrews describe Jesus as the "very imprint" of God's glory. What do you think the author meant by describing Jesus in this way?

**Gospel:** Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

John opens his Gospel with the same first words of the Old Testament, "In the beginning..." He sees the birth of Jesus, "the Word became flesh," as creation itself beginning anew. Do you find this an interesting way to think about the birth of Jesus? ©LPi

**GETTING TO KNOW OUR SAINTS...**

**ST. STEPHEN | FEAST DAY DECEMBER 26**

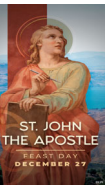


The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. A man filled with grace and power, he worked great wonders among the people. Some Jews debated with St. Stephen but could not match his wisdom and spirit. Eventually, a charge of blasphemy was brought up against him, and the local population demanded that he be tried and sentenced. He was seized and carried before the Sanhedrin.

Despite the danger he faced, in front of the Sanhedrin and his accusers, St. Stephen gave a long speech about the history of Israel and the blessings that God had given upon His chosen people. He talked about how Israel had become disobedient despite God's abundant mercy. This enraged his accusers, and eventually the crowd dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death.

Even in his final moments, St. Stephen displayed great forgiveness... he is still a role model for us to follow.

**SAINT JOHN THE APOSTLE | DECEMBER 27**



Saint John was one of the Twelve, part of Jesus' inner circle, among the few that witnessed the Transfiguration, the raising of Jarius' Daughter, and the Agony in the garden at Gethsemane. He and his brother James were the sons of Zebedee and Salome. When Jesus called them, they left their father mending nets and followed him. Jesus called the brothers "Boanerges," meaning "sons of thunder" — they were passionate in their faith and Jesus had to rebuke them for their fiery zeal on more than one occasion. John, the younger brother, possibly the youngest disciple, was the only one present at Jesus' death.

Saint John the Apostle is traditionally thought to be the author of the fourth Gospel, the three Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation. However, there has been some debate among scholars from antiquity to the present. Tradition also gives him the title Beloved Disciple and John's Gospel sees him seated next to Jesus at the last supper and the one to whom Jesus gives the care of Mary at the crucifixion.

Although Church tradition says that John survived the other disciples, living a long life, much of it is steeped in myth and legend. Some say he retired to Ephesus after the crucifixion with Mary and remained there until he died. But in other traditions he is more active. For a time he remained in Jerusalem with the other disciples, then founded churches in Asia Minor. In a legend of his persecution, during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, John is taken to Rome and thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil but preserved from death. He is then exiled to the island of Patmos where the Book of Revelation was written. Most accounts agree that after his exile and the Assumption of Mary he returned to Ephesus where he died sometime after 98, during the reign of the emperor Trajan.

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**FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GIVING - WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 9/10**

\*YTD Figures updated to include amounts from 7-1-23 to 9-30-23

<i>Fiscal Year 7-1-23 to 6-30-24</i>	Budgeted	Actual	Over/Under	*YTD
Offertory Envelopes Used & e-fund participants	245	115		
Offertory (including loose cash)	\$ 5,293.00	\$ 5,934.32	641.32	939.37
Energy	289.00	242.00	(47.00)	(717.61)
Other: Coffee & Donuts, Flowers, Memorial Trees, Candles	\$ 1,115.39	759.76	(355.63)	(21,606.13)
Mass Intentions	n/a	410.00		2,255.00
AOD Collections: Retirement Fund for Religious	n/a	595.00		595.00
Holy Days: Saints/Souls/Immaculate Conception	n/a	804.00		3,551.00
Budget deficit donations		95.00		4,911.37
Christmas		3,492.00		3,492.00
Priest Retirement Fund		40.00		1,257.00

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Owned and Operated**

David Hopcroft, Owner  
Alex Hopcroft, 3rd Generation

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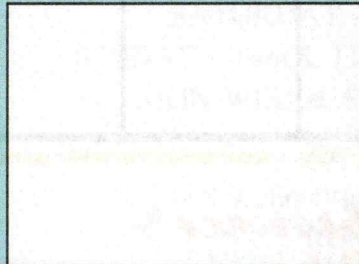
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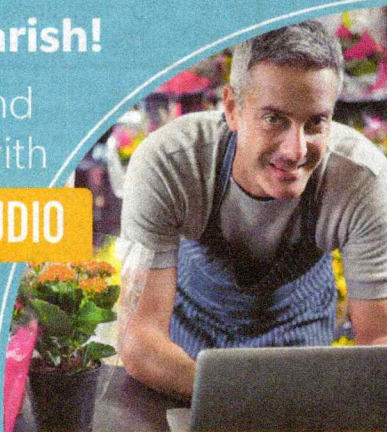
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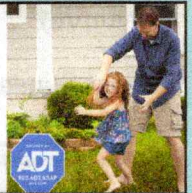
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