



St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

Madison Heights, MI www.stvincentferrer.net

DECEMBER 31, 2023 † FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

From The Pastor

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...
And the Word became Flesh and made his place among us. Jn 1

What better way to begin the New Year than to ground ourselves in the truth of God's Word come to us through the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus? Jesus is our source and origin, our deepest longing, and the fulfillment of an eternal promise. The deepest meaning of life is love. We are created in love, for love, and by love. Love is the deepest truth of our existence and the path to our greatest happiness. God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God in them.

These truths are expressed in today's Feast of the Holy Family and further highlighted in the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God on January 1st. Despite all the social changes we have experienced, the family remains the foundation of society and the stability of human growth and development. As families go, so goes the rhythm of culture and society. Families are the seedbed of love that nurtures secure and faith-filled children into confident and mature adults.

Consider the wisdom of the Book of Sirach. Love and honor shown to parents bears the fruit of forgiveness that reveals bonds of love built on mutual respect. In homes of faithful love there is an open path to God through prayer. This may seem highly idealized. It is not. We all know the messiness of family life and the challenges that must be faced. It is in this same messiness that bonds of love are created through patience, tolerance, and generous forgiveness that confirms deep acceptance. Sometimes this fails and separation may take place. The path of prayer remains open for the Lord to bring healing and restoration.

How did Jesus become the man of faith and power that he became? It is too simple to say, 'Well, he was God.' Yes, he was but he was also as human as you and me, yet without sin. Consider the love, faith, and example of justice and mercy Mary modeled for Jesus. Throughout his life, Jesus was deeply loved and influenced by the faith and holiness of his Mother. Joseph too must have had a strong impact on the young Jesus as he learned a manly way of work, discipline, and strong character. Jesus, like the rest of us, was the product of his family life. His home was filled with love, modeled on justice and mercy

through the trials of poverty and the oppression that surrounded him.

This is what made the family holy. They persevered through every challenge, loss, hurt, confusion, and difficulty they faced. They remained actively committed to love. Too often, we can be afraid of holiness believing that it is always for someone other than me. This is not true. Our fundamental holiness is not built on our good acts or behavior. True holiness is a gift from God in the fruit of our redemption. In Christ, we are made one with God.

The second reading today is a beautiful expression of this holiness and is worthy of your reflection. 'Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourself in heart felt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another, forgiving one another... Over all these virtues put on love, the bond of perfection.' Too idealized? Maybe, but this is the identity we have been given in Christ that will serve our lasting peace. Not easy, not pretty, but tell me this desire and hope is not in your heart. Every parent wants a peaceful home secure in love despite the inevitable challenges.

Consider how the Word made Flesh was reflected in the life of Mary, Mother of God. Mary literally carried and brought forth the child from her womb, Jesus who became the adult Christ. How is Christ evident in your family in the ways you try to love, serve, forgive, or model the Christian life? Do not shy away from holiness just because of your imperfections or even the sins that lean against you. Through Christ, you are no longer a slave to sin. You have been freed from its slavery and given freedom in Christ. Your redemption is already accomplished in the Lord Jesus.

As we begin a new year, ponder the opening lines of this reflection. Jesus is the Word made flesh. Through faith, Baptism, and the Holy Spirit, you are also the word made flesh. How do you embody Christ in yourself? You are a dwelling place of God, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. How is the Spirit and the person of God reflected in the way you live your life?

I love the blessing from the Book of Numbers and I offer it to you through my own faith, hope, and love: 'The Lord bless and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!' As you are blessed, become a blessing. Happy New Year.

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

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

Adoration on Tuesdays
8:45am to 10:00am

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, January 1, 2024 MARY MOTHER OF GOD

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

TUESDAY, January 2, 2024

8:00am Mass: Elizabeth Gauronskas† req. by Daughter, Debbie Ager

WEDNESDAY, January 3, 2024

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

THURSDAY, January 4, 2023

8:00am Mass: Intentions of Deanna req. by Mom

SATURDAY, January 6, 2024 EPIPHANY

4:00pm Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer
Intentions of Deanna req. by Mom

SUNDAY, January 7, 2024 EPIPHANY

9:00am Mass: Cathy McCarthy† (3rd R.A.) req. by Family
Alice Palardy† req. by Linda Karolski
Dianne Karolski† req. by Regina Juska-Svoba



READINGS FOR THE WEEK

December 31, 2023

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

Monday: Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 (2a)/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

Tuesday: 1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/Jn 1:19-28

Wednesday: 1 Jn 2:29—3:6/Ps 98:1, 3cd-4, 5-6/Jn 1:29-34

Thursday: 1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98:1, 7-8, 9/Jn 1:35-42

Friday: 1 Jn 3:11-21/Ps 100:1b-2, 3, 4, 5/Jn 1:43-51


Saturday: 1 Jn 5:5-13/Ps 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20/
Mk 1:7-11 or Lk 3:23-38 or 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38

Next Sunday: Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13
(see 11)/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12



Monday, January 1
Feast of the Mother of God
Mass 9am

The Holy Day obligation is suspended. There WILL NOT be an evening Mass on New Year's Eve.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY Blessings

to parishioner Helen Szczerba who turns 100 years old this week!!!

The LORD bless you and keep you;
 The LORD make his face shine on you,
 and be gracious to you;
 The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace.

Numbers 6: 24-26

Thank You *And God Bless You*

Once again, St. Vincent Ferrer parishioners gave generously to our Giving Tree collection for each of four charities: Jail Outreach, \$630.00 in gift cards; Mary's Children and Family center, \$1,015.00 in gift cards; Sanctum House, huge cases of paper products, many pounds of coffee, sugar, sweeteners, creamers, many gallons of laundry detergent, boxes of dryer sheets, and gift cards totaling \$105.00; and finally to the Pope Francis Center: over 150 packages with many items in each package to help keep homeless persons warmer this winter. As representatives of each of these services came to pick up our gifts to them, they expressed deeply grateful sentiments for these blessings.


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 Jan. 2, 2024.

Please make request by January 15, 2024.



The Parish Office will reopen this Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Pray for 

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

...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.

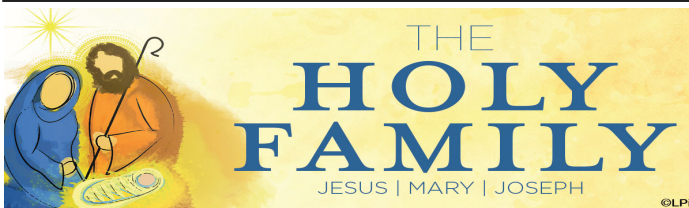
...all who are sick, homebound, undergoing or recovering from surgery, medical procedures, treatments or testing, and those who have made specific prayer requests.

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

- Sunday: The Holy Family; New Year's Eve
- Monday: Mary, The Holy Mother of God, New Year's Day, World Day of Peace
- Tuesday: Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church
- Wednesday: The Most Holy Name of Jesus
- Thursday: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious
- Friday: St. John Neumann, Bishop
- Saturday: St. André Bessette, Religious
- Next Sunday: The Epiphany of the Lord



I remember the first time my older sister asked me if I wanted to hold her newborn son. Terrified, I told her I didn't think it was a good idea. My résumé had nothing to suggest I would be a qualified baby holder. But she warmly told me, "I'll help you hold him." It struck me that she is baby's mother. She is the one who decides who is qualified to hold him. I took him in my arms and soon I began to feel comfortable with that tiny little warm cooing creature in my arms, and soon I no longer feared holding him. Now, twenty-seven nieces and nephews later, holding a newborn child is one of the great joys of my life.

Do we sometimes think that Jesus is given only to the highly qualified, special religious people? In the Gospel of Luke today we hear about the presentation of the Lord in the temple. The newborn son of God is passed around like a baton in a relay race, not guarded like a precious jewel or a breakable china dish. We can see him going from the arms of Mary to Joseph, then to the priest performing the ceremony, then to Simeon the old man, then to Anna the old widow. Each one receiving him and then handing him to the next. A tidal wave of joy and thanksgiving follows wherever he is placed.

Believe me, you are qualified to hold Jesus in your arms. How can I say that with such confidence? Because the mother decides who is qualified. The Blessed Virgin, embodied in the Church, holds him out to you and me. She rejoices to place him in our arms to hold, and to hand him on, too. — *Father John Muir*

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St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

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

Bonnie Riley
Mary Merkel



Please remember them and the souls of all the faithful departed in your prayers.

May all the deceased be welcomed into paradise!

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.

The Sword and the Family

by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

In the first few weeks of parenthood, the tears flowed fast and freely, and with very little provocation.

Sometimes I wept because it was getting dark out, and sometimes because the sun was coming up. Sometimes I wept because the days were so unbearably long. Sometimes I wept because they were so cruelly short and slipped past so quickly, bearing away with them forever these inaugural moments of my daughter's life — moments I knew I would long for on my deathbed.

So, the inclusion of the Presentation of Christ in the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary has always struck me. The Blessed Mother, just a few weeks after giving birth, standing at the holy temple: Is she tired? Is she emotional? Is she frightened? Is she happy? We cannot know for sure, but if she is anything like most of the postpartum women I know, she is all four. But she stands there dutifully, offering her baby to the Lord, and this is what she is told, "A sword shall pierce your heart."

Joyful? I would have snatched the baby back, called the police and sobbed for a week.

But Mary knows that Simeon speaks the truth, and she cannot receive God's will with anything less than joy, even if it means a pierced heart.

Family means love, but love means — what, exactly? Pleasure, fulfillment, contentment? Yes, but so much more, too. Love means you have much to lose.

How full is family life with these beautiful moments which, on the surface, look and feel painful — but hold within them the opportunity to be like Mary, to bow our heads and once again say "Yes, Lord."

"Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another..."

— *Colossians 3:12*

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Prayer for the Family

Dear Lord,

We lift our families to you in prayer — every generation!

Bind our wounds, forgive our debts, show your mercy!

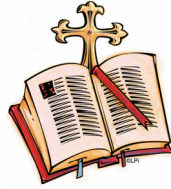
Lead us to deeper communion with each other and You.

Help us, too, to be a holy family. Amen.

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MEN'S FELLOWSHIP & SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

**Saturday, January 6, 2024 at 9am
Faith Formation Office in School**



The men's fellowship group gathers for a scripture reflection/sharing every other Saturday. All men are welcome. No registration or fee required.

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

LIGHTING CANDLES IN CHURCH

Question: Why do Catholics light candles in church?

Answer: Candles have been part of the Church's worship from the earliest times. In the days before electricity, candles and oil lamps were the ways that people lighted buildings. Even today, we often still depend on candles during power outages, relying on their flickering flames to bring light into the dark.

Like our ancestors, we also light candles on special occasions. Think about a festive family meal or a romantic dinner for two — there will often be candles on the table, special objects for a special event. We light candles on birthday cakes and carry them in processions. We also place candles at makeshift memorials that appear when there has been an accident or act of violence. In these moments, their light casts aside a different kind of darkness — the darkness of grief, fear, and death.

The custom of the early Christians lighting candles and lamps at the tombs of the martyrs gave way to the practice of having candles at Mass, honoring the sacredness of the celebration.

As Christians decorated their worship spaces with statues and icons, they would burn candles in front of sacred images and the relics of the saints, basically "shining a light" on what they held to be sacred. When pilgrims would visit these shrines, they would often bring candles to light before the image or relic. These candles came to be a symbol of the person, and their prayer and the burning these candles came to be understood as an extension and continuation of the prayer that was offered. What began as a practical way to provide light has come to be a symbol of the hopes, desires, loves, losses, fears, and faith of everyday Christians offering their prayers to God and his saints.

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CATHOLIC TRIVIA – JUST FOR FUN

Question: True or False: The Catholic Church teaches that those people who don't know and accept the Church will NOT be saved.

Answer: False ©LPi

Ministry Schedule		
January 6/7, 2024		
Mass	4:00pm	9:00am
Sacristan	D Tourville	L Yolkiewicz
Reader #1	J McCown	D Gray
Reader #2	M Kairis	L Yolkiewicz
EME	J McCown	A Goll
	R Pasiak	M Black
	M Kairis	D Gray
Greeters	L Collins	R Juska-Svoba
	P Pasiak	P Rarus
	T Pasiak	D Vu
	R Bertolini	T Lane
Traveling Chalice Host beginning week of January 6/7, 2024		
Jennifer Ballantine		

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK FOR REFLECTION

First Reading: Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3

Abraham and Sarah relied on their faith in the Lord as they struggled with family matters. When have you needed to rely on faith when it comes to your family?

Second Reading: Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

Hebrews teaches us that at every challenge in his life, Abraham consistently trusted and obeyed God. When have you had to surrender complete trust to God?

Gospel: Lk 2:22-40

In their purification ritual in the Jerusalem Temple, Mary and Joseph learn news from Simeon and Anna about their newborn baby, Jesus. In your family, how do you deal with startling or unsettling news?

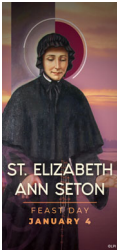
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**INSPIRATION FOR
THE WEEK**

God's timing is not always our timing. Sometimes, we have to wait years for the answer to our prayer. Never despair. Remember that God keeps His word.

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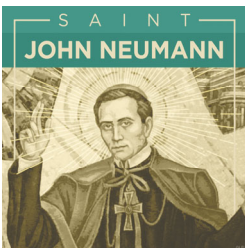
GETTING TO KNOW OUR SAINTS...


ST. ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON | JAN. 4
 (1774 TO 1821)

The patron saint of Catholic schools, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was born in New York City to a prominent family of the Episcopal faith. When she turned 19, she married a wealthy businessman with whom she had five children. He later died of tuberculosis in 1803, leaving her a young widow. After discovering the Catholic faith in Italy, where her husband had died, she returned to New York and converted to Catholicism in 1805.

After several years struggling as a single mother, Elizabeth moved in 1809 to Emmitsburg, Maryland, where she founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, the first community for religious women established in the United States. She also began St. Joseph's Academy and Free School, which started a chain reaction of Catholic-based education in the United States that continues today.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was canonized September 14, 1975 in St. Peter's Square by Pope Paul VI and was the first citizen born in the United States to be given the title of "saint."


ST. JOHN NEUMANN | JANUARY 5

St. John Neumann is the patron saint of educators, immigrants, and, due to the miracles that secured his canonization, sick children. This is a fitting patronage as he was a lover of education and learning from a very young age. In fact, when he was a child, his mother called him "my little bibliomaniac" due to his preoccupation with reading. Born in 1811 Bohemia, in what is now the Czech Republic, he attended the university in Prague preparing for ordination. However, his local bishops were not ordaining new priests at the time because Bohemia was overstocked with priests. He inquired about ordination all over Europe but received the same answer everywhere. Not one to be deterred, John then applied to several United States dioceses. Receiving no immediate responses, the saint took a leap of faith and decided to just immigrate to the United States in 1836, during his 25th year, with only \$40 in his pocket. This risk paid off when he was ordained in New York a month later.

Early in his priesthood he worked primarily as a missionary to German immigrants in Buffalo. His missionary work also created an opportunity for him to spend time in Maryland, Virginia, Michigan, and Ohio.

When he was 29, he joined the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, a congregation of priests and brothers dedicated to helping the poor and most abandoned. He was their first member to profess vows in the United States.

In 1852, at the age of 41, Neumann became the fourth Bishop of Philadelphia. During this time, he organized the individual parochial schools in his region into a diocesan system. This change allowed Catholic schools to quickly increase the number of pupils enrolled by almost twentyfold. Over the course of his ministry, St. John expanded the number of Catholic schools in his diocese from 2 to 100! His passion for education extended to immigrants, like himself, and his love for learning languages made it possible for him to hear confessions in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, and Gaelic!

A man of the people, he could often be found outside the church walls visiting people who were sick, staying in taverns and public houses to teach, and celebrating Mass in people's homes at their kitchen tables. He was canonized on June 19, 1977, following three miracles, two of which regarded the healing of youth from grave illnesses. St. John Neumann was the first American man to be canonized a saint.



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

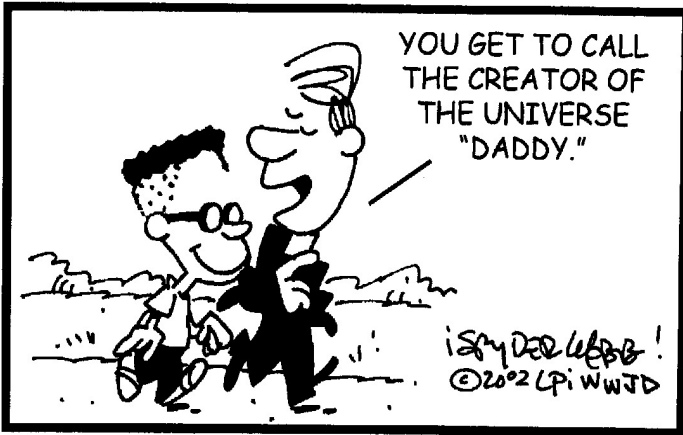
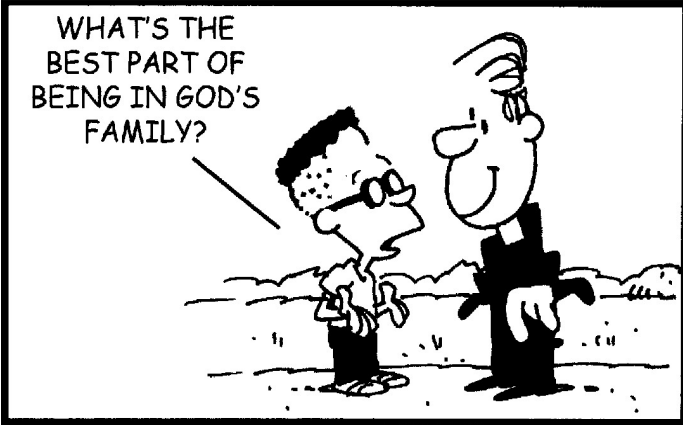
SUNDAY - 9:00am, 11 am

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

WED - 12:10pm



HOLY FAMILY



Belonging to the Family of Christ

I have heard people say, "You don't get to choose your family!" I believe that to be only partially true. I did not choose my father and mother, but my family is greater than my family tree of ancestors. My family includes those who have been there when both my father and mother passed away. My family includes those who came to see my newborn children in the hospital. My family includes those who celebrated with me my greatest triumphs and consoled me in my greatest times of trial. Each and every one of them I have chosen to be a part of my family.

Most of the time we talk about stewardship in terms of time, talent, and treasure. We quantify the size of our gifts, seeing them as things that have a finite value. However, true stewardship has no limits. What we are called to give is everything. When we fully empty ourselves into another and into the reality of God we find ourselves transformed. We truly grow into our own as the creations we became at baptism.

It is in that transformation that we find ourselves connected to others in a profound way. Those who were not connected to us by blood are now connected to us by spirit. Our family, the body of Christ, grows and becomes stronger. In this family, a man can be father to a Son not of his flesh and a woman mother to a Son of a divine origin. In this family, we find our hope and our home. And we must never make the mistake of thinking that is not a choice.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS
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Are You Considering Or Do You Know A Man Considering A Priesthood Vocation?

The Office of Priestly Vocations' discernment group for men (18-55) considering the priesthood is having its next meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 from 7:00-8:30pm. New members can join at any time, as there is no requirement to have been at the last meeting. The previous nights have been a great success with many men excited to talk about their possible vocation to the priesthood.

Meetings are led by Fr. Craig Giera, Director of Priestly Vocations, and will include prayer, group discussion on discernment, light refreshments, and fellowship with other-like-minded men. Please contact the vocation office for more info at 313-237-5812, vocations@aod.org or detroitpriestlyvocations.com/discernment-groups/.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GIVING - WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 16/17

Fiscal Year 7-1-23 to 6-30-24	Budgeted	Actual	Over/Under	YTD
Offertory Env. Used & e-fund participants	245	95		
Offertory (including loose cash)	\$ 5,293.00	\$4,512.12	(780.88)	158.49
Energy	289.00	\$ 128.00	(161.00)	(878.61)
Other: Coffee & Donuts, Flowers, Memorial Trees, Candles	\$ 1,115.39	108.00	(1,007.39)	(22613.52)
Mass Intentions	n/a	10.00		2,265.00
AOD Collections:	n/a	.00		.00
Holy Days: Mary, Mother of God	n/a	8.00		3,559.00
Budget deficit donations		81.00		4,992.37
Christmas		460.00		3,952.00
Priest Retirement Fund		25.00		1,282.00

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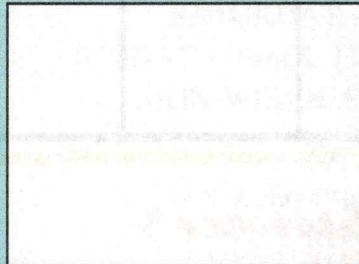
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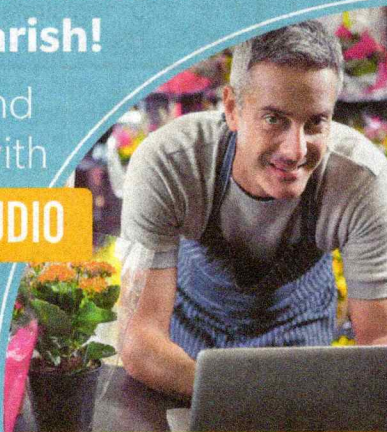
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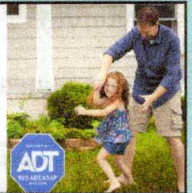
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