



St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

Madison Heights, MI www.stvincentferrer.net

DECEMBER 15, 2024 † THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

From The Pastor

Christmas is the gift of God come to earth, celebrated in the birth of Christ that carries through a season of festivity reminding humanity of our essential unity. For all the war, hatred, division, and competition in the world, Christmas is a beacon of light that reveals our deepest nature to seek, value, and belong to love. This reality reaches beyond Christianity to include the nature, desire, and need of every human being. Some people do not celebrate Christmas. Many unchurched, non-churched, and non-Christians do celebrate. Why? What Christmas celebrates goes beyond the cultural expressions of gift-giving and holiday cheer. Christmas celebrates love; God's love given to the world in the person of the Lord Jesus. It is the nature of love to unite, heal, save, and redeem. These realities reach in, through, and beyond religion. They encompass what it means to be human with a known or unknown acceptance of our dependence on love.

If the Christmas rush has become wearisome for you, remember this. The trappings of the season are wonderful and rich for families and friends alike, but the deeper reality of what is celebrated is the love, acceptance, and belonging that redeems all humanity.

The Third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday. Why do we rejoice on this day? We rejoice in the anticipation of the coming of the Lord. The Lord is near, already among us, in our hearts, and manner of life. Advent prepares us to stir up our awareness of the presence of God in ourselves and in all persons.

Many would ask, where is the joy? Nice word, nice idea, but who is feeling any joy these days? Precisely. We need to be reminded that the joy of the Lord is our strength. From the Prophet Zephaniah we are told, 'The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty Savior; he will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love, he will sing joyfully because of you...'

I read an article recently in the Jesuit quarterly magazine about the epidemic of loneliness in our culture today. More than the elderly, an increasing number of youths are suffering from loneliness with a sense of separation in their lives. The author was making the point beyond merely being alone and feeling separated. Many people today feel disconnected without a sense of belonging. This is an important insight. Well into a generation of internet, iPhone, and computer use, our capacity for and reality of relating to others has diminished. The pandemic only served to heighten this reality. This surely affects

our capacity for feeling joy.

Joy is grounded in love that inspires faith and stirs hope. But if people are not connected with others, how is joy to be known? Separated, joyless, and weary people sought out John the Baptist for hope and renewal. This kind of seeking is in our bones as human beings. Society is weakened when people feel separated, disconnected, or not belonging. John's message was one of hope. People knew they were off track needing a new way of relating and connecting with others and with God. Hearing John's words of hope and repentance, they began to ask him what they should do.

Each of John's directions led to connecting with others in a new way. If you have enough, share. If you are cheating others, stop it. If you are over others, do not manipulate, lie, or accuse others falsely. John's repentance calls for relationships that build unity, justice, and acceptance among people.

Our culture is built on competition that sets one over and against another creating judgments, prejudice, and hatred for groups other than my own. This model not only defeats joy, but also love, justice, and right relationships. It defeats our ability to see the inner worth, value, and uniqueness of others. These rhythms of social interactions weaken our religious and moral identity.

Christian joy is found in the gift of God given in the coming of the Lord Jesus and the redemption he has accomplished. Redemption is the fruit of forgiveness that leads to acceptance and new relationships. Redemptive love leads to restored unity, connectedness, and a valued sense of belonging. Only in this way can we become who we are called to be with joy, hope, and faith. Healthy, holy people are never self-made apart from others. We need one another to become who we are in Christ in the maturing realization of who Christ is in us.

Notice how we gather. We come to the table of Communion that unites us with the Lord. The Communion we share forms us into community through relationships, and connectedness. We feel a part of one another. We see and respond to the needs of each other. Bonds of belonging are created. We can feel joy and meaning in our faith. Hope is revived, and we are drawn towards acts of love. This is the ground and foundation out of which joy grows. Rejoice today in the faith we share through bonds of love and belonging. Spread the Good News.

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 Chapel



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
Thursdays 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



MONDAY, December 16, 2024

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

TUESDAY, December 17, 2024

8:00am Mass: Deanna (Special Intention) req. by Family

WEDNESDAY, December 18, 2024

8:00am Mass: Priests & Deacons in our Family of Parishes

THURSDAY, December 19, 2024

8:00am Mass: Joseph Dong Kim Pham† req. by Family

SATURDAY, December 21, 2024

4:00pm Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer Miriam & Norb Grabowski (for healing) req. by Jean & Mike Pietraszewski

Joseph & Margaret Sanocki† req. by Family
Bonnie Riley† (1st R.A.) req. by Family
Deanna (Special Intention) req. by Family

SUNDAY, December 22, 2024

9:00am Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer Giuseppe Miceli† req. by Virga Family
Joseph Dong Kim Pham† req. by Family
Richard & Cathy McCarthy† req. by Corrine McCarthy
Deanna (Special Intention) req. by Family

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 9am to 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 – call for appointment

Matthew Zinser, Childhood Faith Formation Coordinator

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



DECEMBER

*Month of the
Immaculate Conception*

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

December 15, 2024

Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a/Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 (6)/
Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18

Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6
and 7bc, 8-9/Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8,
17/Mt 1:1-17

Wednesday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19/
Mt 1:18-25

Thursday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-
6ab, 16-17/Lk 1:5-25

Friday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/Lk
1:26-38

Saturday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-
3, 11-12, 20-21/Lk 1:39-45

Next Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
(4)/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45



THIS WEDNESDAY - 7PM

**ADVENT
PENANCE
SERVICE**

ALL ARE WELCOME



BE THE FLAME FOR OTHERS

I remember growing up in Catholic school and having to make construction paper Advent wreaths every single year! The little yellow flames would be cut out and held until each new candle was lit. Great idea, except for the fact that the chance you could find the flames greatly diminished as each week passed. I will bet over 50% of the wreaths never received a 4th flame! Of course by then, most kids in elementary school had moved on to Christmas. Christmas was not a day. It was an entire experience of vacation from school.

You may or may not have an Advent wreath in your home or office, but those flames are rather insignificant to the flame that should be burning in our hearts during this season. How are you finding ways to light your fire? How are you preparing the way for Christ to come into your life and the lives of those around you in a more profound way?

The ritual of an Advent wreath is a good idea for anyone. But don't think that your preparations are done simply because you have one. You are called to be a flame to others during this season, reminding them of why we celebrate this time at all. Each person is a candle to be lit, and you have the gifts, given to you by God, to light them. At Christmas, you want God to look at you and see all the light generated by those He lit through you. Now is the time. Don't wait until Advent is almost over. You might not be able to find your own flames if you wait too long.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS ©LPI




**STAY AWAKE,
THE KING IS COMING!**

December 16th - 6:30pm

Join us for a celebration of Scripture and music foretelling the coming Messiah featuring young people in our Faith Formation Program and the St. Vincent Ferrer choir. Light refreshments to follow.

THE WELL THAT NEVER DRIES UP

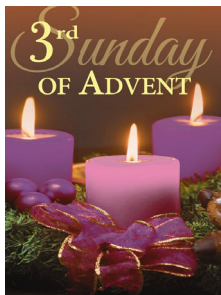
Depending on how your mood is today, the words of Paul will hit you differently. "Rejoice always," he tells us. Well, if your football team is poised to win this weekend or next, maybe you're really feeling this vibe. But if you've got a long slog at work ahead of you this week and a to-do list that only seems to grow and never shrink, it may make you grumble. "Rejoice always? Always? When I'm tired? Cranky? When I'm sick of doing and giving? Thanks, Paul. I'll be sure to scribble that phrase on a Post-It and stick it to my dashboard for when some entitled punk inevitably cuts me off on tomorrow's morning commute."

When we feel this way, we know it's time to head back to the well. Think of all the places in Scripture where God compares His love, His mercy, His salvation to water. And not just any water — living water, water that moves. God's strength is not a stagnant puddle sure to evaporate and disappear. It's water you can keep coming back to. It's water that never dries up.

Which is good news for us, because we never stop failing to do what we should, never stop failing to feel the joy and the compassion and the selflessness we are called to. We need a source of living water if we are going to 'rejoice always.' To be everyday stewards, we need a well that never empties.

The fountain of salvation never dries up. There is always more there for us to draw from. It's a sign of His commitment — so let us, in turn, be committed to Him.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS
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On a bright Spring morning, a passerby once saw St. Francis of Assisi hoeing a row of beans and asked him, “What would you be doing right now if you knew this was the last day of your earthly life?” The Saint responded, “I’d keep hoeing this row of beans.” Preparing for this world to end — whether by our death or by Jesus’ glorious coming — invites us to live not in the past or the present, but deeply in the present moment.

This same point is on display in the simple advice given by the wild and eccentric John the Baptist. He speaks of the one who is to come who will baptize **“with the Holy Spirit and fire”** (Luke 3:16). Despite the bizarre awesomeness of this announcement, he tells his listeners to engage in the present moment with simple acts of justice and love as their preparation for Jesus’ coming, sharing their clothes and food, eliminating greedy and underhanded practices, being content with their wages. It’s so undramatic. But how many actually did it? We don’t know. How many of us will commit ourselves to these types of humble and demanding practices in our lives? That’s what we should be doing now in our present moment, not worrying about the future.

Advent challenge: Name one way you are doing the bare minimum towards others in your daily life. Or name something you are doing because you are not content with your financial situation. Pray: “Jesus, if it is your will, help me to stop doing these things this week. Help me prepare for your coming.” Then make the appropriate changes.

— *Father John Muir*
©LPi

Prayer REQUESTS

- ...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.
- ...respect for life from conception to natural death
- ...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.
- ...the respect for life from conception to natural death
- ...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: 3rd Sunday of Advent
- Saturday: St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church
- Next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent

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INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Give. Love. Act with justice. This, says John, is how to live out your repentance. As Christmas approaches, be “baptized” by these words of God’s greatest prophet. Let them fill you with new life as you await the coming of Christ.

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WHY DO WE DO THAT? CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED

CHRISTMAS

Question: With Christmas fast approaching, can you give me some practical tips to prepare myself and my family that will help us stay grounded in what this holiday is really about? With all the commercialism, it's easy to stray.

Answer: Happy times and events bring fond memories and a renewed sense of love and kinship with others. The anticipation is half the joy of the event itself. The coming of the Lord is that kind of event that people have been looking forward to for generations with fervent hope and desire. It gave them strength and courage as they waited for the coming of the Lord.

We know that Christmas is rushed. Sales begin in August and carols blare long before the season begins. Everyone laments the commercial aspects of the season, but as Advent begins, do something to help you be more mindful of the Lord's coming. Use an Advent wreath, or enthrone the Bible prominently, or read the readings from the Bible assigned to each day. Postpone the tree and decorations until closer to Christmas. Establish new family rituals, customs and prayers that help remind everyone that we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Fasting, daily Mass, a special celebration of reconciliation, reaching out to those alienated from family or society, and visiting the homebound manifest the love of the Christ Child and the Holy Family. Resist the temptation to rush the season. In his own time and in his own way, God will come. Our task is simply to be watchful and ready. ©LPi

CATHOLIC TRIVIA – JUST FOR FUN

Question: What do we call an ornamental canopy above an altar inside a church? ©LPi

Answer: A Baldachino or Baldachin.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK FOR REFLECTION

First Reading: Zep 3:14-18a

The prophet Zephaniah speaks of a future joyful time of God's forgiveness and return to his people, Israel. What excites you most as you think about the future?

Second Reading: Phil 4:4-7

Paul encourages the Christians in Philippi to be a community that rejoices and finds peace with God. What could you celebrate this Advent season with family or friends?

Gospel: Lk 3:10-18

John the Baptist encouraged the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers to live ethically in very practical ways. How could this apply to your life this week? ©LPi



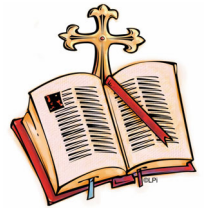
Parents requesting the Sacrament of Baptism for their infant or toddler must attend a class on the sacrament.

The next class for parents and godparents will be **Saturday, January 4, 2025 at 1:30pm**

To register, call the Parish Office before Christmas Eve or after January 1, 2025

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP & SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Saturday, December 21st 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 fees or registration are required.



Fourth Sunday of Advent Lighting the Candle of Love

Saturday, December 21, 2024

4:00pm Mass: Tom & Terri Riley

Sunday, December 22, 2024

9:00am Mass: Angela Maynard

Ministry Schedule

December 21/22, 2024

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| Mass | 4:00pm | 9:00am |
| Sacristan | R Pasiak | L Yolkiewicz |
| Reader #1 | M Simmons | R Grant |
| Reader #2 | R Pasiak | L Yolkiewicz |
| EME | M Simmons | M Waskowski |
| | P Miles | L Yolkiewicz |
| | T Riley | R Grant |
| Greeters | R Juska-Svoba | T Lane |
| | L Collins | D Vu |
| | M Smith | B Gutowski |
| | R Bertolini | S Bosetti |

Traveling Chalice Host beginning week of December 21/22
Rorie Grant

EUCCHARISTIC SAINTS SERIES

**Blessed Alexandrina Maria
de Costa
October 13
1904-1955**

Blessed Alexandrina Maria de Costa was born in Balasar, Portugal. Her father died when she was very young.

She and her older sister Deolinda were sent to Póvoa de Varzim to attend primary school. There they were taught literacy skills and catechism, but they were only able to stay for 18 months.

Alexandrina worked in the fields as a farmhand until she was 12 when a bout of typhoid weakened her. After she recovered, she took up sewing like her sister. When she was 14, several men broke into the house intent on doing harm to the girls. Alexandrina jumped from a window to save herself, falling 13 feet to the ground. The fall severely damaged her spine.

By 1924 she was entirely paralyzed. Although she prayed fervently for a cure, she was instead granted the ability to embrace her suffering with love. She experienced frequent ecstasies during which she saw and spoke with Mary and Jesus. Despite the extreme pain she lived with, outwardly she gave smiles and joy. In October 1938 she began to relive the three-hour passion of Jesus every Friday. Witnesses recorded some 182 occurrences of the passion when Alexandrina's paralysis was overcome, and she moved about the room in the steps of Jesus.

When the passion ecstasies ended in 1942, Alexandrina's broken body was confined again to bed. For the 13 years and seven months until her death, daily Holy Communion was her only food and drink. In 1944, Alexandrina became a member of the "Union of Salesian Cooperators" and offered her suffering for the salvation of souls and for the sanctification of youth. St. John Paul II beatified her on April 25, 2004. Blessed Alexandrina Maria de Costa, pray for us!

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Asking the Question

by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

I have found in my life that if I am certain of the answer to a big and complicated question — right away, no doubts or hesitations — there is a high likelihood that the answer is actually the wrong one.

Because most of the time the truth is buried beneath a thicket of pride, prejudice, and ignorance. To find our answers, we have to be ready to put the gardening gloves on and pick through the thorns. We have to pray. We have to reflect. We have to question ourselves and others. We have to examine our feelings. And then we have to pray some more.

See, I would be willing to bet that the tax collectors and soldiers knew. Deep in their hearts, they knew.

They knew when they approached John the Baptist and asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" that his reply was *not* going to be: "Keep doing exactly what you're doing."

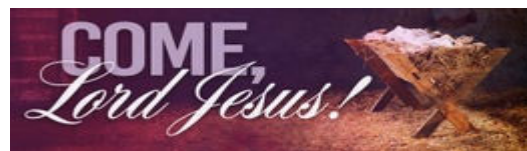
They had heard this guy preach. They knew what he was about: repentance. They might not have known exactly what John the Baptist was going to tell them to do, but they knew whatever it was, it was going to be a challenge. It was going to turn their lives upside down.

I give them credit for asking the question. That's a hard thing to do, and I don't do it enough. Too often, I'm afraid to ask the question.

How do I love this person? How do I live out my baptismal call in this particular situation? How do I draw water from the fountain of salvation — and how do I do it with joy, as we are commanded by the Psalms?

Christmas is ten days away. Are we asking the question?

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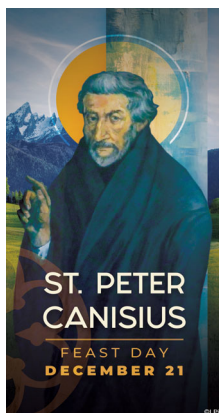
**ST. PETER CANISIUS | FEAST DAY DECEMBER 21
May 8, 1521 – December 21, 1597**

Born in Holland, St. Peter Canisius was a preacher, teacher, and writer throughout his whole life. At the age of 19, he received a master's degree from the university at Cologne. Soon afterwards, St. Peter met Peter Faber, the first disciple of Ignatius of Loyola, who influenced him so much that he eventually joined the Society of Jesus.

St. Peter Canisius founded colleges and seminaries, served as a missionary, cared for the sick or imprisoned, and wrote close to eight volumes of letters — many about St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Leo the Great.

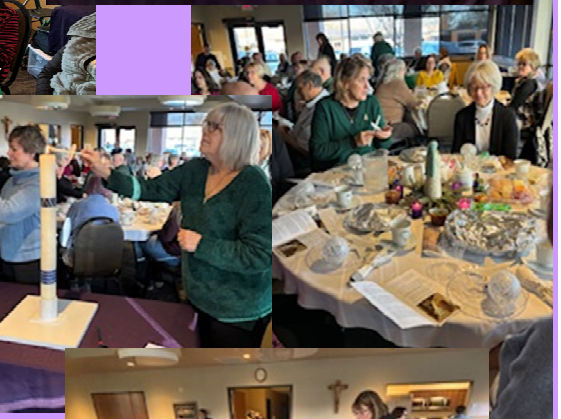
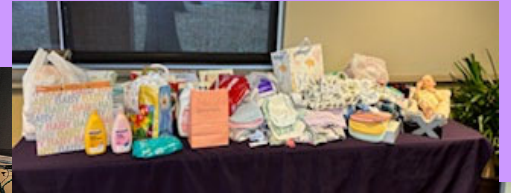
A man blessed with many talents, St. Peter Canisius is a wonderful example of a man who developed his talents to further God's work here on earth.

©LPi



ADVENT TEA 2024

Thank you to Br. Bob Malloy and all who attended the SVF Advent Tea. An afternoon of prayer and fellowship was enjoyed by all attendees. Thank you for your generous baby item donations: bibs, fleece outfits and blankets, onesies, pajamas, socks, sippy cups, stuffed animals, diapers, baby wipes and \$50 in cash. The Madison Family Planning Image of God was the recipient of your donations.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GIVING - WEEK ENDING DEC 7/8, 2024

| <i>Fiscal Year 7-1-24 to 6-30-25</i> | Budgeted | Actual | Over/Under | YTD |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Offertory Env. Used & e-fund participants | 245 | | | |
| Offertory | \$ 5,185.00 | \$ 4,740.22 | (444.78) | 10,663.20 |
| Energy, Coffee/Donuts, Flowers/Trees, Candles, Mass Intentions | 472.00 | 1,316.00 | 844.00 | 22.45 |
| Fundraising: includes Budget Deficit envelope, CSA returned | 1,673.00 | *8,283.40 | 6,610.40 | 193.24 |
| Bequests | | 57.00 | | 862.50 |
| Holy Days: Immaculate Conception & Mary Mother of God | | 1,003.00 | | 4,148.00 |
| CSA 2024 76,110.34 Pledged | | | | 73,632.84 Paid |
| *includes 8,097.40 CSA returned | | | | |

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