



Voice of St. Mary's
Parish Monthly
Newsletter

Pastor

Rev. Adam Cesarek

Permanent Deacon

Deacon Jim Wallace

Vicar

Rev. David Sabel

Parish Secretary

Patti Zehr

Rectory/Parish Office

815-844-7683

Email -

zehr.patti@stmaryspontiac.org

Contributors -

Father Adam

Principal Karen Jones

Patti Zehr

Kim Cheek

Megan Lauritsen

Danielle Gill

Kel Krenz

DECEMBER 3RD & 4TH:

NATIVITY WALK AFTER ALL
WEEKEND MASSES IN THE MPR

DECEMBER 20TH:

PENANCE SERVICE AT 6:30 PM

DECEMBER 4TH:

RITE OF ACCEPTANCE, 9:30 MASS
RECEPTION FOR DEACON RAY
WHITE FOLLOWING 9:30 MASS
K of C BREATFAST 7:30 - 11:30 AM

CHRISTMAS EVE MASS TIMES

PONTIAC: 4:00 & 8:00 PM

LEXINGTON: 4:00 PM

DWIGHT: 4:00 PM & MIDNIGHT

CHENOA: 5:30 PM

DECEMBER 7TH & 8TH:

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:
5:30 VIGIL, 6:00 & 8:15 AM

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS TIMES

DECEMBER 10TH:

BLESSING OF CHRISTMAS
LIGHTS AFTER 4PM MASS

PONTIAC: 7:00 & 9:30 AM

FLANAGAN: 8:00 AM

LEXINGTON: 9:00 AM

CHATSWORTH: 10:00 AM

ODELL: 10:30 AM

CHENOA: 11:00 AM

DECEMBER 10TH & 11TH:

BAMBINELLI SUNDAY BRING YOUR
BABY JESUS FIGURINES TO MASS



Come let us adore Him

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



Upcoming Good News

We are entering into a very exciting time of the year, and I wanted to get you in the know as to some of the excitement coming as we prepare for the "most wonderful time of the year."

As we enter December, we are very excited that Ray White will be receiving his ordination to the diaconate on December 3rd at the Cathedral in Peoria. Please keep Ray

and his wife Cece in your prayers as they prepare for this very exciting weekend. Ray will be a deacon at Mass for the first time at St. Mary's on Sunday, December 4th at the 9:30am Mass. There will be a reception for Ray after that Mass in the parish hall. At that same Mass, we will, for the first time, introduce those who are considering joining our Catholic faith at Easter time with our annual Rite of Acceptance. On your way over to the parish hall, there will be a great number of nativity scenes set up through the school and into the parish hall, where the Knights of Columbus will also be offering a great breakfast and you can congratulate Ray and his family after you eat.

Next, we get to celebrate our mom in heaven, Mary. We will celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary on December 7th and 8th. That feast is a holy day of obligation so that we can all come together to celebrate our mom. The Vigil Mass will be at 5:30pm on December 7th and we will have a 6am Mass and All School Mass at 8:15am on the December 8th. Other area churches will also have Mass times available later in the day on the 8th.

Advent is always a good time to keep growing in your prayer life and a deeper relationship with Jesus. There are several Small Groups underway. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is inspiring you to grow your faith this holy season. Reach out to Kel Krenz for any further information.

The weekend of December 10th and 11th, we will do our annual blessing of the Baby Jesus from your home Nativity sets. Bring your Baby

Jesus to any Mass that weekend and we will do a blessing. Join us for the 4pm Mass that weekend where we will also do what I think I can now call an annual outdoor lighting ceremony and blessing.

St. Mary's School Christmas Program will take place on Tuesday, December 13th. The children have been doing a fantastic job of getting ready for it with the help of Mrs. Yedinak and Mrs. Erickson. I am very excited to hear them get us ready to enter the Christmas season with some joyful Christmas music.

Our Penance Service will be held on Tuesday, December 20th at 6:30pm with at least four priests available to get our souls all ready for Christmas.

On Christmas Eve we will have two Masses. Our first Mass will be at 4pm on Christmas Eve and we hope to have the children's choir lead us in the music at that Mass. We will also have an 8pm Mass on Christmas Eve which will be a bit earlier opportunity to have a candlelit Mass on Christmas Eve. Christmas Day we will have our standard 7 and 9:30am Masses as we normally do on a Sunday.

The following weekend will be New Year's and a great way to enter into the New Year celebrating our Mother Mary on her feast day of Mary, Mother of God. That is a holy day of obligation which this year falls on a Sunday so we will celebrate it at the standard weekend Mass times.

Our high school Gonzaga retreat will take place the weekend of January 7th—9th so please invite your high school students to this incredible weekend to grow in relationship with Jesus and other high school students. That weekend we also celebrate the Epiphany and will hand out this year's chalk for our chalk blessing.

There is much to look forward to and a lot more beyond that, but those are a few highlights of the holy season of Advent and Christmas which I cannot wait to celebrate with all of you.

My prayers are with you all in these holy seasons! God bless you all!

Fr. Adam

RAY WHITE TO BE ORDAINED TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE



Ray White will be ordained to the Permanent Diaconate on Saturday, December 3 at the Cathedral in Peoria. Fr. Adam will vest Deacon Ray. There will be a reception to congratulate Deacon Ray and his family on Sunday, December 4 in the parish hall after the 9:30 Mass. Everyone is invited to attend.

Ray and Cece White moved to Pontiac in 1989 with Ray's job as a Manufacturing Engineer with Caterpillar. Ray and Cece grew their family here with children Matthew, Philip, Jessica and Noah, and now a son-in-law and two granddaughters, as well.

When asked what drew Ray to the Permanent Diaconate he replied, "I was in the St. Mary's Adoration Chapel when God put the thought of being a Deacon on my heart. I had thought about the Permanent Diaconate before the last two formation classes, but Cece and I decided not to. Adoration, reflection and prayer drew me in this time."

A deacon in the Catholic Church can baptize, marry, and bury the dead, in addition to preaching at Masses. They cannot hear confessions or administer the Anointing of the Sick.

PRAY FOR OUR SCHOOL & CHURCH FAMILIES THIS YEAR

For 2022, we ask everyone to pray for specific church and school families each weekday. Please remember these families in your prayers each day for them to grow in their faith this year. Thank you.



Thurs Dec 1	Rick & Donna Higgins Family Josie Wenger's Family
Fri Dec 2	Gwen Hilsabeck Family Briggs Yantis' Family
Mon Dec 5	Andrew & Donnell Hoeniges Family Adam Vitzthum's Family
Tues Dec 6	Pat Hogan Family Jack DeYoung's Family
Wed Dec 7	Janet Hurt Family Lanie McGuckin's Family
Thurs Dec 8	Tom Hogan Family Chris Gray's Family
Fri Dec 9	Thomas & Karen Hinz Family Chase & Rhys Carley's Family
Mon Dec 12	Mike & Mary Hoffman Family Owen & Lydia Kelly's Family
Tues Dec 13	Patricia Honig Family Jack & Kevin MacZura's Family
Wed Dec 14	Judy Hoffrichter Family Avery Van Waes' Family
Thurs Dec 15	Jennifer Horrie Family Maddie & Cameron Mikeworth's Family

Fri Dec 16	Janet Hogan Family Emma & Ava Lind's Family
Mon Dec 19	Ann Householder Family Hadley & Harlow Noonan's Family
Tues Dec 20	Glenda Hoegger Family Leleu Thurston's Family
Wed Dec 21	Joseph Hogan Family Barrett & Holland Tissiere's Family
Thurs Dec 22	John & Sabrina Howard Family Kloey Wagner's Family
Fri Dec 23	Harriet Hughes Family Flynn Eggleston's Family
Mon Dec 26	Cleveland & Amy Jean Jacques Family Grace Becker's Family
Tues Dec 27	Mary Johnston Family Champ Daily's Family
Wed Dec 28	Lorraine Hughes Family Adrian & Bianca Gill's Family
Thurs Dec 29	Victor & Susan Johns Family Zander Miller's Family
Fri Dec 30	Jean Jones Family Ryann Krenz's Family

GONZAGA XII SET FOR EARLY 2023

Gonzaga XII is rapidly approaching, and will be here before we know it. We have a great team of teens and adults that have been working together to prepare for this retreat since the beginning of October. Leading the charge in the planning has been the two youth directors, Tyson Cramer and Carrington Gray. They have had the help and guidance of the adult director for this year, Jeff Stark. The weekend retreat will take place January 7th and 8th. Registration is open to all high school students, and we would love to have you with us. Tyson Cramer shared these thoughts on his experience with Gonzaga "I became the Youth Director for Gonzaga because I thought it would be fun and challenging. Last year on team everyone was really nice and supportive. This year I hope we have a great weekend and everyone has fun!" I know that the team has had a lot of fun preparing the retreat, and that will certainly overflow into the weekend. Forms for registration can be picked up at any of the entrances to the church and can be found at the Youth Group website, <https://stmarysyouthgroup.weebly.com/gonzaga.html>, or, please feel free to email me at lauritsen.megan@stmaryspontiac.org. Carrington describes the impact from Gonzaga as "indescribable, it allowed for me to open my eyes to see the goodness that is spread because of His word. I now want to spread the Gospel even more after seeing the impact it has on the kids! It is just an indescribable feeling seeing God working on and in people!" We have been praying for everyone that will join us for the weekend and hope to see you there!



We recommend acting soon as this opportunity is on a first come, first serve basis and Caterpillar may reach their cap quickly!



CATERPILLAR
FOUNDATION
CATERPILLAR

In support of Giving Tuesday, the Caterpillar Foundation will provide a limited-time 2:1 match through their Matching Gifts Program for global employee and U.S. retiree gifts made starting November 28 through December 12, 2022 (or once the match total reaches \$2M USD).

**Gifts made to St. Mary's School are eligible for the Caterpillar Foundation Matching Gifts Program.
Your \$100 gift could be a \$300 gift!
Please consider the difference you can make!**

From the Principal's Desk...



Christmas will soon be here, the gift buying, the decorating, the baking. If that fills you with anxiousness, then come to St. Mary's where we are preparing for an ADVENTure!!

The birth of Jesus is coming soon! In anticipation of this glorious day, we are inviting you to share your family Nativities with us. We will have a Nativity walk on Saturday, December 3rd and Sunday, December 4th. You will be able to set your Nativities up between 12:00 pm and 3:30 pm on Saturday, December 3rd. The Nativity Walk will be open from 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm on Saturday, December 3rd and 8:00 am - 11:00 am on Sunday, December 4th. All Nativities must be picked up by noon on Sunday, December 4th.

To help us prepare for your nativities, please sign up using the link on the website: church.stmaryspontiac.org

In other school news, our Christmas program is Tuesday, December 13th. We will have two programs; PK-3rd will be at 6:15 and 4th-8th at 7:00. Our program will be in the Church.

As we go about our days which lead up to Christmas, instead of completely focusing on the many items on our lists, take time to breathe, relax and remember to make Christmas about Christ.

St. Mary's School
Annual Fund Drive
is underway.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Help us reach
our \$35,514 goal!

school.stmaryspontiac.org



2023-2024 REGISTRATION

Kindergarten

- Registration for current PreK4 students and current SMS families begins 12/5/22.
- Registration for new families begins 1/4/23.

4-year old PreK

- Registration for current PreK students, re-enrolling in PreK, and current SMS families begins 12/5/22.
- Registration for new families begins 1/4/23.

3-year old PreK

- Registration for current SMS families begins 3/1/23.
- Registration for new families begins 5/1/23.

For more Information:

school.stmaryspontiac.org

815-844-6585

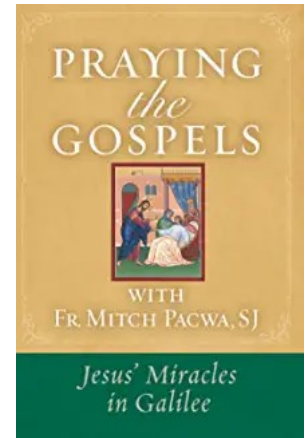


SMALL GROUP SIGN UPS COMING SOON!

You do not want to miss this opportunity to grow in relationship with Jesus and to grow in relationship with fellow parishioners.

Watch for small group sign ups coming! New groups will begin in January and run for 6 weeks. We will delve into **Jesus' Miracles in Galilee**.

We will also offer a small group to revisit the **Launching of Jesus' Ministry**. This is for those who missed the current small groups, or who wish to revisit this material.



ST. MARY'S PARISH SEPTEMBER 2022



"They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you."

~ Deuteronomy 16:16-17

WE THANK YOU

We continue to be truly humbled by the generosity of our parishioners. Thank you to those who answered the call to increase their offertory for St. Mary's this year. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and much needed to support our current and continued operations and ministries.

A QUARTERLY UPDATE ON OUR FINANCIAL JOURNEY

	Previous Fiscal Year July 1 - Sept. 30, 2021	Current Fiscal Year July 1 - Sept. 30, 2022
REVENUES	\$410,053.95	\$477,469.15
EXPENSES	\$401,398.17	\$424,189.98
GAIN/(LOSS)	\$8,655.78	\$53,279.17

- Report covers both Church and School Operations

First quarter numbers for the current fiscal year are strong for St. Mary's! We continue to rely on your prayers and generosity to provide what we need to run our operations, and we work hard to be good stewards with the gifts we have been given. The Increased Offertory Appeal held earlier this year was most beneficial and we encourage you to continue those commitments made.

Other means of supporting St. Mary's Parish, in addition to the Sunday Collection, include memorials, bequests from wills, and gifts to the School Annual Fund currently underway.

We also encourage the use of our Online Giving platform which can be found on our website: stmaryspontiac.org

From The Back Page

by Kim Cheek

Happy New Year!! Advent is the 4 weeks before Christmas. The Latin translation of Advent is “coming” so we are preparing to celebrate the “coming” of Jesus’ birth but also what is to come in our readings, our family, all of the things that come up during this time of year. Advent really is a time to be joyful and to prepare for all that is to come.

However, I also know that in reality this time of year is often hard for many because of losses or changes in traditions. Growing up as a kid, my mom loved Christmas. She collected Santa Claus- es of all shapes and kinds to put throughout her house. She loved the spirit of the holiday and that child-like innocence even the adults got to have this time of year. She passed this love of the holidays on to me, and I get super excited when it is time to decorate and prepare.

I love putting up my tree and adding all of my kids’ ornaments that they made when they were little and the ones passed down from parents, grandpar- ents, etc.... It is sentimental and truly a time of reflection. Despite all of this hap- piness and joy, I tend to get a little weepy. My mom has been gone for 9 years. I have many of her decorations and ornaments and I love them, but it reminds me that she isn’t here anymore. But she is. Truly she is present in my heart and my memories and in the love she showed me my entire life. This gift, this physical symbol of the holidays was her joy and love for family. The tradition of decorating and celebrating is something that I get to share with my kids every year and they will hopefully pass on to their children some day.

As we celebrate the new year in our church, celebrate your memories. Have your moments of quiet to reflect on the family, the loved ones that are no longer physically present. Celebrate the LOVE you have in your heart for those that are present and those that are past. Because ultimately what we all received those thousands of years ago was the gift of LOVE. The holy family showed us the way. Mary and Joseph followed their faith and trust in God and gave us life with the birth of their son. Jesus has shown us how to love. Use what he has giv- en us to show your LOVE. Be hopeful and have a blessed new year.

Ten ways to love

1. Listen without interrupting.
(Proverbs 18)
2. Speak without accusing.
(James 1:9)
3. Give without sparing.
(Proverbs 21:26)
4. Pray without ceasing.
(Colossians 1:9)
5. Answer without arguing.
(Proverbs 17:1)
6. Share without pretending.
(Ephesians 4:15)
7. Enjoy without complaint.
(Philippians 2:14)
8. Trust without wavering.
(Corinthians 13:7)
9. Prove without punishing.
(Colossians 3:13)
10. Promise without forgetting.
(Proverbs 13:17)

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
PONTIAC, IL
Permit No. 7

Church of St. Mary
Box 374
PONTIAC, ILLINOIS 61764
Address Service Requested