



## VOICE OF ST. MARY'S

*Parish Newsletter*

### Pastor

Rev. Joseph A. Baker

### Permanent Deacons

Deacon Jim Wallace

Deacon Ray White

### Vicar Forane

Rev. David Sabel

### Parish Secretary

Patti Zehr

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### ALL SAINTS DAY-HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION

Masses will be offered at the following times:

Thursday, October 31 at 5:30pm

Friday, November 1 at 7:00am, 8:15am (school  
Mass, please sit in back half of church)  
and 5:30pm

### ALL SOULS DAY

Mass on Saturday, November 2 at  
10:30am where candles will be lit  
and names will be read of those  
we have lost this past year.

1:00pm Rosary at St. Mary's Cemetery

# GATHER TO GIVE THANKS AT OUR ANNUAL PARISH THANKSGIVING DINNER

St. Mary's has been so blessed with great priests, a growing school enrollment, dedicated volunteers, strong finances and parishioners who loves our Lord. Every year we are given an opportunity to gather with our church family to thank God for all he has given us as a parish, but also for all we have been given as individuals and families.

Join us on Sunday, November 10 for our Annual Parish Thanksgiving Dinner to thank the Lord for all the gifts we have been given, and to enjoy a delicious meal prepared by the Women's Guild.

The meal will be served in the parish hall from 11am to 2pm. Those dining with us are asked to enter from Main Street at the new gym entrance. Those who prefer a carryout can enter the hall from Chicago Street and go into the Rosary Room to get your meal to go. Cost is \$12 for adults, \$6 for children in grades 1-8 (children in kindergarten and younger eat free) and \$35 family maximum for those in the same household. There will also be a Silent Auction and 50/50 raffle. You need not be present to win.

Many hands make light work for the women (and men) of our parish. Volunteers are needed to prepare, serve and clean up, and food donations are requested to help keep expenses down and the meal cost reasonable. Go to our website at: [church.stmaryspontiac.org](http://church.stmaryspontiac.org) and scroll to the bottom of the page for the link to volunteer or donate food.

We look forward to seeing all our parish families at our Thanksgiving Dinner on November 10. We have been so blessed here at St. Mary's! Now let's gather to give THANKS!



# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



In this fall of 2024, you've surely noticed there is no shortage of division in our land. Turn on the news, and regardless of the outlet, it won't be long before you're inundated with the negativity and anger that seems so prevalent around every corner. Of course, the specific event dominating the airwaves these days is the upcoming election.

Our own Bishop Louis Tylka recently wrote in his monthly letter to priests, "We live in a challenging time for our nation and our world ... The media has largely become an echo chamber for those who read, watch, or listen to them. And to a great extent, they do little more than insulate people in bubbles that harden the political divide and poison our relationships."

With the vitriolic anger spewed upon us from each side of the aisle, many have sensed a lack of peace, not just in the exterior world but also within their own person. If you are among the masses suffering from such a trial, what is the answer? What ought we to focus on more than all else? If we haven't already done so, how should we vote in the upcoming election? And on a personal level, how can we recover peace of soul and inner joy? Remember, Jesus desires us to have this joy. He has shared His message with us, He says, so "that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (Jn. 15:11)

Well, a lot could be said in response to each of those questions, but

above all, we must step back and consider what really matters and what really endures. From the beginning, Christians were eager to follow a crucified man, a seeming paradox, because their eyes were cast not on what was ahead but on what is above.

The influential Cardinal Robert Sarah from Guinea in West Africa who formerly oversaw the celebration of the Sacraments and the Sacred Liturgy throughout the world reminds us in his book *The Day is Now Far Spent*, "Christians ceaselessly recall that we are not made for this world. Our fatherland is found in Heaven! This does not mean that our earthly fatherlands are nothing and that we do not have to apply ourselves to make them places of human flourishing, fraternity, decency, truth, and justice. On the contrary, we must look for ways to live there in unity, proud of our respective cultures." He further challenges us who live in Western society, stating that we "have fallen prey to a profound identity crisis. We no longer know that we form a people."

So, it starts with this, remembering our identity. Remembering our identity! And what is our identity? As

Christians, we are children of God. We have been adopted into His family! Imagine if politicians set that as the foundation for their governance and their political campaigning, as they once did in days gone by – days that gave us national slogans such as *In God We Trust!*

Those days may have passed, but as Cardinal Sarah reminds us, we are still called to love our native land and apply ourselves to making it a place of human flourishing. Pope Francis adds: "We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern." So what are the principles to consider as we choose the candidates we will support?

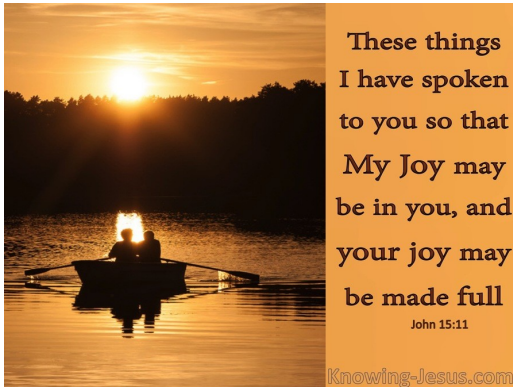
The bishops of the United States have published a document titled *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* which can be found easily online- <https://www.usccb.org/resources/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship-pdf>. In the document we are reminded of many important things to consider as we approach the election ballot and are also encouraged to remember what is most essential to human flourishing, which more than anything else is life itself. Without appropriate respect for human life, one may rightly surmise, can anything else matter?

In the revised 2023 introduction to the bishops' document, they wrote, "Grave threats to the life and dignity of the human person include euthanasia, gun violence, terrorism, the death penalty, and human trafficking. There is also the redefinition of marriage and gender, threats to religious freedom at home and abroad, lack of justice for the poor, the suffering of migrants and refugees, wars and famines around the world, racism, the need for greater access to healthcare and education, care for our common home, and more," but preceding that list, they were clear in stating as the Catholic Church has long held, "The threat of abortion remains our pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone."

All of the issues above are threats to the Pro-Life and Pro-Family identity of the Catholic Church, but as you have no doubt heard in the news and in political ads, abortion is a key issue of this current election cycle. So it is important for we, as Catholics, to know that our Church is explicitly pro-life, opposed to the ending of human life in the womb, and is serious enough about this that our bishops have told us it is "our pre-eminent priority."

So looking ahead to our post November 5 world, it would be foolish to think the societal anger will dissipate. For each of us, though, it is important that we remember our world is very imperfect. Try as we may, the Kingdom of God will never be fully established on this earth. Until we come to terms with that, we will have a lack of internal peace, but if we come to the point in which we live in the world while having our heart focused on the world to come, then no matter what happens on November 5, we will live more fully as people of hope, people of peace, and people of joy, a joy which this world cannot give.

Blessings, Fr. Joe





Exciting things are happening for St. Mary's Youth Group! Meeting twice a month, our enthusiastic group of young people has been diving into meaningful discussions, learning about the power of holy friendships, and starting an exploration of Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. We have been blessed to host two inspiring guest speakers, Michele Brummel and Brad Follmer, who have helped deepen our understanding and connection to our faith.

God's hand is clearly at work as more youth join us with every meeting! With so much interest, we are excited to share that we are on the waitlist to attend the Catholic Heart Workcamp this summer in North Haledon, New Jersey. But that's not all—our ambitious group also has eyes set on attending the Steubenville Youth Conference in Joliet, IL, next summer! These opportunities will strengthen our spiritual journey and provide life-changing experiences of service and worship.

To prepare for these exciting adventures, we're hosting our very own Gonzaga Retreat right here at St. Mary's! This overnight retreat, happening on January 4th and 5th, promises to be a powerful time of spiritual growth, connection, and reflection. Our retreat team is already hard at work, praying and planning to ensure a welcoming and transformative experience for all attendees. Youth from 8th grade through senior year in high school are encouraged to participate. Gonzaga retreat applications can be found in the back vestibule of church. The cost for this spiritual growth event is just \$25, and checks can be made payable to St. Mary's Youth Group. For more information, please check the church bulletin.

We are so grateful to the parents and families who continue to entrust their children's faith journey to St. Mary's Youth Group. Together, we are raising up a generation that loves and follows Jesus with passion and purpose!



**A NIGHT OF PRAYERS AND SONGS**  
**Wednesday, November 13 at 5:30 in church**  
 Come celebrate St. Mary's collaboration with Evangelical Catholic this past year and a half in an hour of prayers of thanksgiving and petition and hymns of praise and adoration. The program includes a reflection by Father Joe, music prepared by Kathy Schulz and Merryn Krenz and a variety of prayers and litanies. Evangelical Catholic disciples at St. Mary's have longed to pray with our parish in offering God thanksgiving for His faithfulness and asking for His continued support of evangelical efforts at St. Mary's. Please come and share our joy! The evening will be followed by wine and cookies.

Please join us for our monthly Holy Hour to specifically pray for Vocations within our church and community. We will gather at 6:30pm in the church. The Holy Hour will include time for quiet prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament, group prayers for Vocations, and will conclude with Benediction.

Dates for the Holy Hours will be:  
 November 21    December 19    January 16

Our diocese and our world need many good, holy priests and consecrated men and women, in addition to faithful marriages, to continue God's mission on this earth. Please join us to pray for all vocations.



## PILGRIMAGE TO MARYTOWN & MUNDELEIN SEMINARY

Fr. Joe and 54 members of our parish recently enjoyed a day at Marytown and the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe, and Mundelein Seminary (formally the University of St. Mary of the Lake) for a day of prayer, contemplation, discovery and fellowship. With a charter bus providing the transportation, Fr. Joe led the group to the beautiful campuses, museum, grotto, library and chapels of these two must-see Catholic sites in the Midwest. Two seminarians with connections to our parish joined the group for part of the day. Delicious food from the dining hall kept the group nourished. Fr. Joe looks forward to coordinating another pilgrimage to a different location in the spring.




**THANKSGIVING  
DAY MASS WILL  
BE OFFERED AT  
8:00AM. JOIN  
US TO THANK  
THE LORD FOR  
ALL WE HAVE  
BEEN GIVEN.**

## NEW FLAGPOLE & MONUMENT AT ST. MARY'S CEMETERY

With our local VFW Post building up for sale, the VFW recently contacted St. Mary's Cemetery about moving a monument to our cemetery that had been in front of their building. The monument recognizes "all those who gave their lives for their country that others may live in freedom". With the addition of the monument it was fitting to add a flagpole with the American flag, and a Papal flag signifying Catholic ground. The flagpole and monument were placed directly behind the altar which was added to our cemetery a couple years ago.

On a beautiful fall day, the crew from Pontiac Granite Company laid the foundation and set the monument stone in place. Mark Masching from Kelly Electric added lighting for the flags. Parishioners Glenn & Jan Zehr donated the flagpole, and cemetery sexton Ron Schulz helped coordinate the efforts. We are grateful to all these people and businesses who helped bring the desire of our VFW Post to fruition.






2024 ANNUAL DIOCESAN APPEAL

"Do everything for the *Glory of God.*"

1 Cor 10:31



**2024 GOAL \$80,751**  
**PLEGGED TO DATE \$55,851**

With a lower goal this year, we are doing well but need everyone's participation. We are grateful to those who have made a pledge to the Annual Diocesan Appeal. If you have not yet made your pledge, please do so at your earliest convenience. Extra pledge cards can be found at the doors of the church. Remember, that any monies raised over our goal are returned to our parish.

# From the Principal's Desk



Mrs. Karen Jones

Greetings,

The month of October is a time for apples, mums, and pumpkins! At school, we have just finished our parent teacher conferences and enjoyed a four day break. Our first quarter of school is almost completed. We all have settled into our daily routines, and for some of our faculty, we are helping our families with harvest. We thank God for the bountiful harvest. As I help in the fields by taking a meal or helping to move trucks from field to field, I thank God for the beauty of this time of year. I hope you are taking time to enjoy God's work in nature. The changing of the tree colors and the shortening days remind us of the passage of time. Fall is a beautiful time of year and is a reminder of God's goodness.

With many blessings,

*Mrs. Jones*

*I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13*



A photo of the entire St. Mary's School community was recently taken. If the group appears quite a bit larger than last year, it is! 42 new students from 25 new families joined St. Mary's School for the 2024-2025 school year. We welcome these students to our SMS family and we're grateful for the opportunity to help them grow academically and spiritually.

This photo also highlights the new windows that were installed by Grieff's Exterior this summer on the west end of the school building. Your monthly gifts to the Blue Envelope Building Maintenance Fund paid for this project.

## TEACHER NEEDED AT ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

**Third Grade Teacher:** Must have a valid Illinois teaching certificate. We are seeking Teachers who know and love Jesus. We seek someone with a desire to make disciples of their students and grow in discipleship with other staff. Candidates must portray abilities of healthy teamwork among colleagues along with a desire to share their knowledge and love of Jesus with students and staff.

Please send 3 letters of recommendation and a copy of your transcripts, along with your resume and cover letter to Mrs. Karen Jones, St. Mary's School, 414 N. Main St. Pontiac, IL 61764 or you may email these items to: [jones.karen@stmaryspontiac.org](mailto:jones.karen@stmaryspontiac.org)

## TEACHER'S AIDE NEEDED

St. Mary's School has an immediate opening for a Teacher's Aide/Paraprofessional. 15-20 hours per week, Monday-Friday. Must be dependable and like children. Must have an associate's degree. Please send your letter of interest, resume and 2 recommendations to: Principal Karen Jones, St. Mary's School, 414 N. Main St., Pontiac, IL 61764

## PRAY FOR OUR PARISH FAMILIES THIS YEAR



*We ask everyone to pray for specific church and school families each week-day. Please remember these families in your prayers each day for them to grow in their faith this year. Thank you.*

Mon Oct 28	Judy Hoffrichter Family Paul Huter Family	Fri Dec 6	Denny Krippel Family Jennifer Krueger Family
Tues Oct 29	Patricia Hogan Family Jennifer Horrie Family	Mon Dec 9	Mary Kilbride Family Pat & Paulette Krippel Family
Wed Oct 30	Ann Householder Family Tom Hogan Family	Tues Dec 10	Jane Kuerth Family Tom Kurtenbach Family
Thurs Oct 31	John & Sabrina Howard Family Harriet Hughes Family	Wed Dec 11	Jeff & Karen Kuska Family George & Georgette Kutsor Family
Fri Nov 1	Patricia Honig Family Lorraine Hughes Family	Thurs Dec 12	Don & Linda Lambert Family Amber Lanning Family
Mon Nov 4	Colleen Huxtable Family Judy Hynes Family	Fri Dec 13	Dale & Jenny Larkin Family Deanna Lauer Family
Tues Nov 5	Miranda Jackson Family Julie Jacobs Family	Mon Dec 16	Mick & Amanda Lauritsen Family Jane Larkin Family
Wed Nov 6	Cleveland & Amy Jean Jacques Family Bernard Jenkins Family	Tues Dec 17	Margo Law Family Sue Ledford Family
Thurs Nov 7	Ashley Jobst Family Victor Johns Family	Wed Dec 18	Alicia Legner Family Janine Leonard Family
Fri Nov 8	Kari Johnson Boyd Family Keran Johnson Family	Thurs Dec 19	Erik & Grace Limberg Family Beth Legner Family
Mon Nov 11	Vic & Susan Johns Family Marshall & Patricia Johnson Family	Fri Dec 20	Jane LoPiccalo & Suzanne Gullo Family Marge Loughran Family
Tues Nov 12	Ken & Christy Jones Family Bill & Kathy Kallas Family	Mon Dec 23	Bill Legner Family Larry & Lucille Limberg Family
Wed Nov 13	Mike & Joan Kane Family Vic & Tammy Johns Family	Tues Dec 24	Mike Linsky Family Dan & Sami Legner Family
Thurs Nov 14	Heath Kapper Family Larry & Karen Jones Family	Wed Dec 25	Doris Legner Family Dolores Locke Family
Fri Nov 15	Jeff Keller Family Bob & Marie Kane Family	Thurs Dec 26	Raymond & Christian Logan Family Ed Legner Family
Mon Nov 18	Eric & Lisa Kelley Family Delores Kelly Family	Fri Dec 27	Elizabeth Legner Family Robert & Beth Limberg Family
Tues Nov 19	John & Sue Kelly Family Ashlee Keneipp Family		
Wed Nov 20	Jan Kennedy Family Nikki Kiest Family		
Thurs Nov 21	Alex & Corinne Klus Family Leo Kelly Family		
Fri Nov 22	Patrick & Seely Kelly Family Bob & Stephanie Kennedy Family		
Mon Nov 25	Seth Kennedy Family Philip & Michael Kelly Family		
Tues Nov 26	Ryan Kelly Family Kevin Knittel Family		
Wed Nov 27	Madison Knowles Family Bruce Koerner Family		
Thurs Nov 28	Shannon Knittel Family Samuel Kelly Family		
Fri Nov 29	Tom & Becky Kelly Family Ralph Kohn Family		
Mon Dec 2	Tim & Mary Kelly Family Chuck & Connie Kostelc Family		
Tues Dec 3	Chris & Ally Kinate Family Brennan Krenz Family		
Wed Dec 4	Michael & Maria Kreush Family Cindy Kridner Family		
Thurs Dec 5	Kel & Kelly Krenz Family Paul & Lisa Krieghauser Family		

**O God of Creation, you have blessed us with the changing of the seasons.**

**As we welcome the autumn months, may the earlier setting of the sun remind us to take time to rest.**

**May the brilliant colors of the leaves remind us of the wonder of your creation.**

**May the steam of our breath in the cool air remind us that it is you who give us the breath of life.**

**May the harvest from the fields remind us of the abundance we have been given and bounty we are to share with others.**

**May the dying of summer's spirit remind us of your great promise that death is temporary and life is eternal.**

**We praise you for your goodness forever and ever.**



# ENCOUNTERING THE EUCHARIST

## Everyone Can Evangelize

The Eucharistic Revival continues into the Year of Mission, sending on-fire Catholics back out into the world to share Christ's love "for the life of the world." We will continue to spread the Revival movement throughout the Church's 2025 Jubilee Year and beyond.

We are all called to evangelize, and thanks to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we are well-equipped for this mission. It may not mean spreading the Gospel in a foreign land or going door-to-door with the Good News—and it may require overcoming some fears—but the Lord is asking each of us to step out of our comfort zone and evangelize one-on-one.

There is someone in your life right now whom Jesus longs to call to himself. He wants to spark a relationship with them and bless them with his sacraments. In this Year of Mission, Catholics across the U.S. are saying "yes" to a special form of heart-to-heart accompaniment called the **Walk With One** initiative. This is your opportunity to be God's instrument in the life of another person. Imagine how our families, neighborhoods, and country will be transformed if every active Catholic answers this call! Learn more at [www.eucharisticrevival.org/walk-with-one](http://www.eucharisticrevival.org/walk-with-one)



Keep in touch with us!

TEXT           PONTIAC           TO 84576

OR CONNECT WITH US ONLINE AT:

[stmarysparish3.flocknote.com](http://stmarysparish3.flocknote.com)



## ST. MARY'S PARISH SEPTEMBER 2024



### WE THANK YOU

Prayers of thanksgiving are offered daily for our parishioners who give so generously for the financial security of our parish and school. Please continue to donate whatever you can, whenever you can.

## A QUARTERLY UPDATE ON OUR FINANCIAL JOURNEY\*

	Previous Fiscal Year July 1 - Sept. 30, 2023	Current Fiscal Year July 1 - Sept 30, 2024
<b>REVENUES</b>	\$471,647.74	\$653,265.56
<b>EXPENSES</b>	\$398,796.18	\$530,605.16
<b>GAIN/(LOSS)</b>	\$72,851.56	\$122,660.40

- Report covers both Parish and School Operations

Our income is higher due to increased enrollment and tuition, a generous gift from a parishioner, and over \$16,000 from the 4-H Fair Kitchen. Our expenses are higher due to pay raises and related taxes, medical insurance increases, higher utility expenses, and new windows and a new reading curriculum for the school. Our Finance Council is committed to being good stewards with the gifts we have been given.

# From The Back Page

by Margo Law

Our Mother Mary introduced us into the understanding of what it means to ponder. We hear this word used when the angel Gabriel greeted Mary saying, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." Mary responds feeling troubled and ponders what this unexpected celestial announcement might mean. This inspires us to follow Mary's lead in praying the mysteries of the Holy Rosary with wonder, depth, and a childlikeness we can find through pondering.

To ponder, unlike a fleeting thought, is to meditate, examine carefully, even to ruminate over and over again, sometimes without a conclusive determination. This is a different kind of thinking; a unique way to contemplate in which we can engage and enjoy. Not analyzing. Not understanding. It means even suspending judgement and simply observing.

To ponder a beautiful autumn leaf, how its colors mingle and seem to shimmer can fill a person's mind with wonder. To consider how God has created these billions of individually designed leaves to be so uniquely different, how God creates a stunning blanket of color when these apparently worthless plants fall to the ground dead, and how children and small animals know how to play with this beauty are gifts we can embrace. Surely, they are offered to us to enjoy, to ponder the extent of our Creator's fondness for us, and to realize His penchant for making beauty.



Creation, Holy Scripture, the Sacraments, special events, mysteries, and the people who touch our lives are great subjects to ponder! Letting our minds explore and contemplate these can lead us to a deeper understanding of who God truly is in our lives, especially when we ask for His help in pondering. Allowing our hearts to be open and vulnerable to ponder nearly inexplicable things is a wonderful way to broaden our inner landscapes. The intellect and the heart work together when we ponder, creating integrity through our humble efforts.

What and how we think matters! Saint Paul directs us to think purposefully and virtuously.

"Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

~Philippians 4:8

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