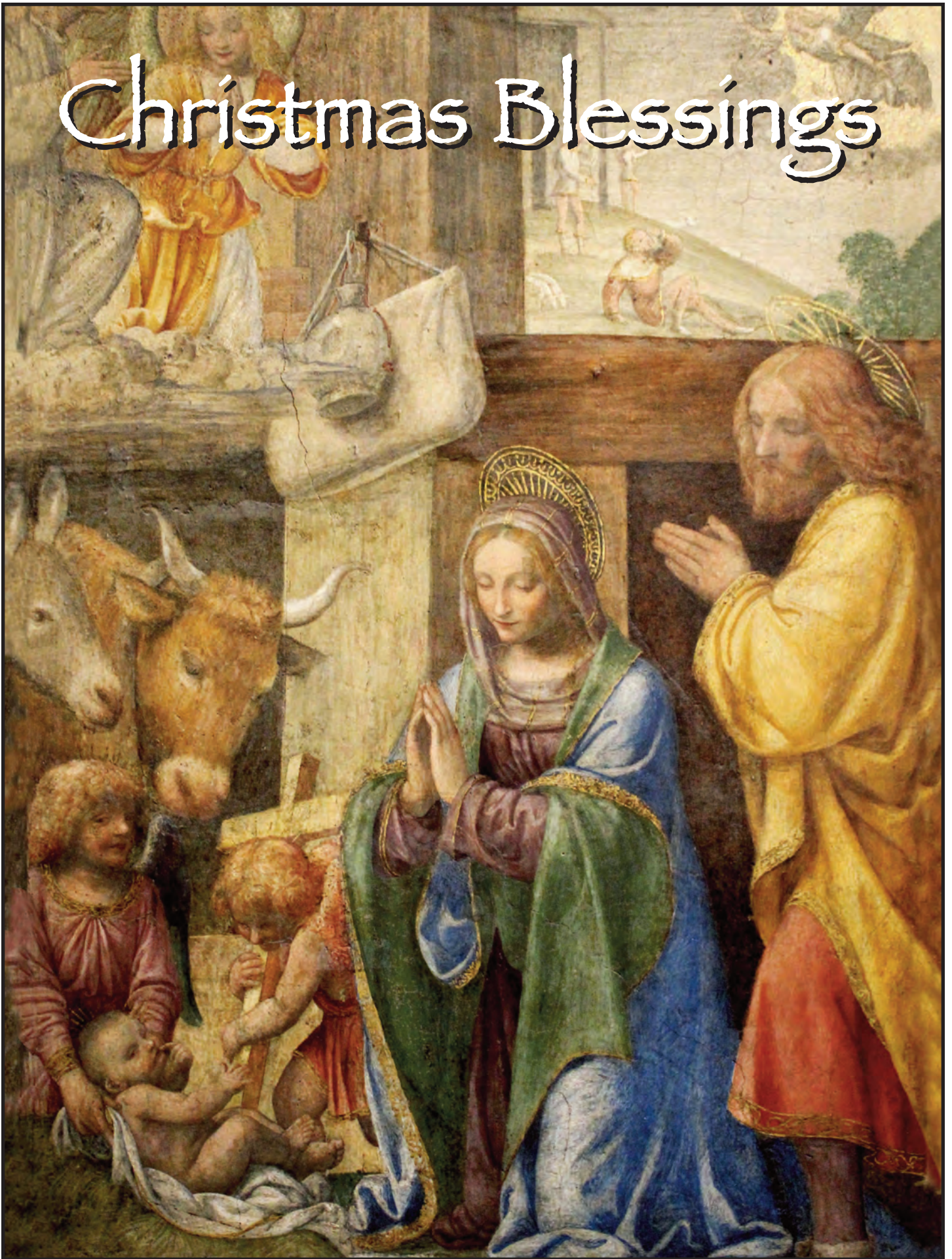


Christmas Blessings



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Monday, December 26 – 7:00 a.m.

St. Stephen, The First Martyr
Acts of the Apostles 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22

Communion Service

Tuesday, December 27 – 7:00 a.m.

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1s & 2-8

Eugene Zackey
(By Bob & Judy Schenk)

Wednesday, December 28 – 7:00 a.m.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
1 John 1:5-2:2; Matthew 2:13-18

Dave Downey
(By Kay Downey)

Thursday, December 29 – 7:00 a.m.

Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35

Amy Ormond Lucky
(By Jim & Fritzie Harper)

Friday, December 30 – 8:30 a.m.

(School Mass)

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Cindy Harper Coats
(By Donnie & Linda Howard)

Saturday, December 31 – 4:00 p.m.

AT ST. THOMAS

Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
1 John 2:18-21; John 1:18

Paul Koettters
(By Maurice & Clara Schmidt)

Saturday, December 31 – 5:30 p.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY

Matt, Mary, Jennifer, Francis, Dick, Laura,
Bob, Pinky, Jim, Pat & Frank Volk
Roger & Scoot Shelts, Bob & Shirley Langan
and Agnes Patterson
(By Larry Volk)

Sunday, January 1 – 8:00 a.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God, the Octave
Day of the Nativity of the Lord
Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21

Parishioners of St. Thomas & Holy Family

St. Thomas – 10:00 a.m.

Norbert & Rita Cramsey
(By Sarah & Brent Kearby Family)

HOLY FAMILY TITHE TO THE LORD:

December 17-18, 2022

Holy Family: \$4,671.00

School Support: \$160.00

Sister Parish: \$20.00

Immaculate Conception: \$45.00

Christmas: \$500.00

Holy Family weekly budgeted amount: \$6,500

ST. THOMAS TITHE TO THE LORD:

December 18, 2022

St. Thomas: \$2,416.00

Votive candles: \$49.25

Christmas: \$100.00

Christmas Flowers: \$25.00

St. Thomas weekly budgeted amount: \$2,635

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ **Legion of Mary** meets each Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. in the convent. All are invited to pray the rosary with us and learn more about the Legion. "With Mary's help we guide, console and enlighten others."
- ❖ **Nocturnal Adoration:** Saturday, January 7 beginning at 10:00 p.m. and concluding on January 8 at 7:45 a.m.

Please contact Tammy at (217) 773-2825 or tmckeown@smseagle.org with any information you wish to have placed in the bulletin. I will need any information by Monday at 2:00 p.m. for insertion into the next weekend's bulletin.

OFFICE HOURS

School Office hours will be Monday - Friday - 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Our phone number is: (217) 773-2825.

The rectory phone number is: (217) 773-3233.

SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following in your prayers:

All Caregivers † The shut-ins of our parish and community † Matthew Bishop † For the safety of all of our military † For a Special Intention †
Gay Gunn † Don & Marie Hendren †
Jolene Lawson † Sharon Johnson †
Gavin McDaniel † Boyd Tenhouse †
Janice Leverton † Margo Pool † Gary Shields †
Carroll Hedden † Abby Schuhardt †
Jim Steinkamp † Heather Poppy †
Stanley Harms † Sheila Thompson †
J. J. Gronewold † John Norkus † Jim Wort †
Marilyn Wort † Carolyn Kassing † Cal Noelke †
Kimberly McKinny † Bryce Shank †
Elaine Parkin & family † Sheila Roberts †
Kay Downey † Marilyn Clark † Jim Heaton †
Vera Marie Rolf † Nancy Salrin †
Christine Colgan Moore † Maddy Perry †
Dwayne Koch † Lori Bradshaw †
Susie Parker Campbell † Debra Parker Baker †
Jeanette Shields † Connie Johnson †
Tom Langan † Oakley Ham † Cameron Francis †
Norma Herbster † Fritzi Harper † Rick Flatt †
Elizabeth "Libby" Tichy † Mark Carlock †
Jeff Kozak † Carol Likes † Rob Dresden †
Jennie Neisen † Roger Busen † Sandy Smith †
Janice Hendricks † Kendall Atteberry †
Mark Ebbing † Joan Weilbacher † Roger Lanz †
Aaron Koch † Eleanor Logsdon

ST. THOMAS

St Thomas Youth Group: There will be no formal youth group in December. The Mast family is looking for another couple or couples to join us with the youth group. And to help with planning events. Please contact Kailyn 217-617-0282, Gail 217-617-1731, or Gary 217-617-1730.

ST. THOMAS LITURGICAL ROLES

January 1, 2023 - 8:00 a.m.

Sacristan: Jim Clausius
Greeters: Gary & Gail Mast
Lector: Laura Evans

Gift Bearers: Brenda Hoelscher
Eucharistic Minister: Laura Evans
Collection Counters: J. Mock
Ushers: Tod Perry,
Elijah Perry

From the Pastor's Desk

First off, I want to wish each of you and your families a Blessed and Holy Christmas. Our Advent Season, that time of preparation, has concluded and we now enter into the glorious celebration of Christmas, celebrating the Nativity of the Lord, the Salvation of the world and of each one of us.

God's purest Light appears, and Christ lights the way to freedom and salvation, offering us His mercy and a share in His Eternal life. The Christmas story is more than an account of a baby born in difficult circumstances. We celebrate the birth of Christ in time. He is a child, innocent and powerless, and yet He has within Him the awesome capacity to reconcile and heal the whole of creation.

And so, let us rejoice, let us be filled with great joy! Our Scriptures today tell us of the great promise of the Messiah. It is a glorious time for the people of God. Even if we have felt pain or anxiety, our joy endures, for Christ is present with us. Indeed, let us rejoice and be filled with great joy!

And now just a few notes:

-LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:

-Monday, December 26 - Feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr. St. Stephen is one of the seven deacons of the Acts of the Apostles and the first disciple to be martyred (around the year 35). He is mentioned in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I). St. Stephen, Pray for us!

-Tuesday, December 27 - Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. St. John was the son of Zebedee and brother of James. It is presumed that he is the one who is referred to as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." St. John has contributed greatly to Sacred Scripture, authoring three letters, the Book of Revelation, and the most spiritual of the Gospels. He is symbolized by the eagle. He is mentioned in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I). He died around the year 100 at Ephesus and is

the patron of Asiatic Turkey. St. John, Pray for us!

-Wednesday, December 28 – Feast of the Holy Innocents – This Feast commemorates the children slaughtered by the barbaric King Herod whose goal was to kill the Christ Child and preserve his own power. Herod was an evil man, but ultimately, he was powerless against the Infant King of Glory. In the great plan of our salvation, only God the Father could dictate the perfect timing of Christ's sacrifice. His enemies pursued Him from the womb to the tomb but He fulfilled His purpose with the help of the Holy Innocents. Theirs was a hidden martyrdom but their immaculate lives bear witness to His glory as they reside in Heaven with Him forever. The only offense of the Holy Innocents was coming into the world at the same time as the Infant Jesus. They looked like Him and for that, they suffered death.

What about us? How closely do we resemble Christ? Do we "look like Him" spiritually? How do others recognize Christ in us? Can they see Him in the way we speak, act, serve, and love? Together, let us aspire to "look like Christ" in honor of the Holy Innocents. In gratitude for their incomparable gift, let us live to sacrifice for the coming of His Kingdom. May our sacrifices be rewarded with triumph and glory, if not for ourselves, then for those who follow. All the Holy Innocents, Pray for us!

-Thursday, December 29 – Optional memorial of St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr. Thomas Becket was Chancellor of England for eight years and as Archbishop of Canterbury, he defended the freedoms and rights of the Church. He was killed on December 29, 1170 by order of Henry II. He was canonized just three years after his death and is considered the most famous martyr of the Middle Ages. St. Thomas Becket, Pray for us!

-Friday, December 30 – Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (at Holy Family, this is celebrated as a Solemnity). The Holy Family is the patron and model of all Christian families. Today should be a huge family feast, since it is devoted entirely to the Holy Family as a model for the Christian family life.

As Rev. Edward Sutfin states in "True Christmas Spirit," "The children must learn to see in their father the foster-father St. Joseph, and the Blessed Mother as the perfect model for their own mother. The lesson to be learned is both practical and theoretical, in that the children must learn how to obey and to love their parents in thought, word and action, just as Christ was obedient to Mary and Joseph. Helping mother in the kitchen and in the house work, and helping father in his odd jobs about the home thus take on a new significance by being performed in a Christ-like spirit."

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, Pray for us!

-Saturday, December 31 – Optional memorial of St. Sylvester I, Pope. St. Sylvester was Bishop of Rome (Pope) from 314-335, organizing public worship and dedicating the Lateran Basilica. He is one of the first non-martyrs venerated as a saint. He died in 335. St. Sylvester, Pray for us!

-CHRISTMAS – Again, a very Merry and Blessed Christmas to each of you. As we now enter into this glorious Season of Christmas, let us reflect each day on Christ coming into the world. Christmas, remember, is not just a day. It is a Season. The Season of Christmas runs through the Baptism of the Lord, January 9. So I encourage you not to rush this most joyous Season but to celebrate it as we are called to do.

-OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS – These next eight days are what we refer to as the Octave of Christmas. The Octave Day of Christmas is Sunday, January 1.

The following is taken, in part, from catholicculture.org:

We "recognize that Christmas is not only on December 25...The Church's liturgy actually emphasizes the eight days or octave of Christmas. The Church recognizes that the days of the Christmas Octave are repeating the solemnness of Christmas for eight days, concluding on a high note with another solemnity that echoes the solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord.

There are two principal feasts in the Liturgical Year: Easter and Christmas. These are both solemnities (and holydays of obligation) and in

the current Liturgical Calendar are the only feasts that have octaves attached (the 1962 calendar also has an octave of Pentecost). Solemnities are festive and exceptional days, the highest ranked feasts of the liturgical calendar marked with special characteristics...and according to Canon 1251, if a Solemnity falls on a Friday, there is no obligation for abstinence.

An octave is the eight-day period during which Easter or Christmas is celebrated, and includes the actual feast. The eighth day is also called the octave or "octave day," and days in between are said to be "within the octave."...

The Easter Octave is from Easter Sunday to the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, each day being another "little Easter." The Easter octave "overrides" any other feasts on the calendar. Christmas also has an octave, but it is very different from Easter, because it is filled with various feast days, but yet each day is still another "little Christmas."

From Christmas Day until January 1, the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is the Octave Day of Christmas. The Liturgy gives the clues that every day within the octave is treated the same as the original feast day of the Nativity of our Lord. The Liturgy of the Hours repeats Sunday Week I every day of the octave. The Mass has a special Communicantes (In communion...) to insert every day of the Octave when Eucharistic Prayer I is used...Finally, the Gloria is repeated each day of the Octave.

Despite having four days within the octave that are feasts: St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents and the Holy Family (a Solemnity at Holy Family Parish), each of these days is another "day of the octave of Christmas."

It has often been said that Catholics know how to celebrate. The Church has a built-in pattern within the liturgical calendar that provides what man needs to celebrate the feasts of the year: times of preparation and penance building to major feasts that are prolonged, and multi-level feast days spread throughout the year...The octave gives us time to impress upon our souls the mysteries, joys and graces of the principal feasts of the Church year."...

-THANK YOU - I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to each and every one

of you and especially for the cards, gifts, and kind words and gestures for this Season of Christmas. What a blessing it is for me to be the pastor here at Holy Family and St. Thomas Parishes and St. Mary School.

-FEAST (SOLEMNITY) OF THE HOLY FAMILY - As noted above, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and, Joseph will be celebrated this year on Friday, December 30. It is often times celebrated on a Sunday but because of how the calendar falls this year, it is celebrated on Friday.

At Holy Family Parish, this celebration is elevated to a Solemnity since the parish bears its name. Again, a Solemnity is the highest celebration in the Church.

Mass will be celebrated that day at Holy Family at the regularly scheduled time for Friday, 8:30 a.m. I am planning to celebrate the Solemnity with some rolls and coffee after Mass so please plan to join us. We will probably gather in the school cafeteria after Mass or possibly the rectory. I will announce it at Mass that day.

-CONDOLENCES - We pray for the repose of the soul of Jim Stout who died on Tuesday, December 13. Jim's funeral Mass was at St. Thomas on Wednesday, December 21. We pray also for and extend condolences to Jim's family, especially his wife, Marilyn, and their daughter, Michele, in this time of sorrow.

Eternal Rest grant unto Him, O Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon him. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

-ADDRESS CORRECTION - A parishioner informed me that Fr. John Patrick Day has moved and so the address in last week's bulletin was incorrect. His new address is: Fr. John Patrick Day, C.P., c/o Passionist Monastery, 1924 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205.

-SOLEMNITY OF MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD- Next Sunday, January 1 is the Octave Day of Christmas and also the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. I will be offering a Vigil Mass on Saturday, December 30 at both parishes; 4:00 p.m. at St. Thomas and 5:30 p.m. at Holy Family. Our Sunday Masses will be our regularly scheduled

Masses at both parishes; 8:00 a.m. at Holy Family and 10:00 a.m. at St. Thomas.

If we sit and ponder the very title of Mary in this Solemnity (Holy Mother of God), we can immediately recognize its significance and Mary's significance in salvation history. This celebration is elevated to a Solemnity, the highest celebration in the Church. It is normally a Day of Obligation. The very fact that the Solemnity falls on a Sunday this year dictates the obligation for this year.

I encourage each of us to strengthen our devotion to our Blessed Mother. She is a powerful intercessor, a great model, and protector of us all. Mary, Holy Mother of God, pray for us!

-END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS - One final reminder that if you would like to make a year-end contribution, please do so as soon as possible this week.

Additionally, folks are sometimes required to take a withdrawal from a retirement account each year. In many cases, if the withdrawal goes directly to a charitable organization, there are significant tax advantages. If this applies to you, I encourage you to speak to a tax expert soon and consider a contribution to the parishes or to St. Mary School.

-HAPPY NEW YEAR - Although the Church began Her new Liturgical Year on the First Sunday of Advent, next Sunday marks the start of a new calendar year. I pray that you all may have a blessed and holy year.

-CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES - Thank you to those who regularly use their contribution envelopes. If you are not receiving contribution envelopes and would like to, please let me know.

-JANITOR SUB - We are still looking for a person or two who could fill in as a sub for the janitor at St. Mary School for a day or two. It may be that we would need some additional help during the summer as well. We'd like to find a couple of folks who we could call on as needed. If you or someone you know would be interested, please let the principal, Melissa Obert, or myself know.

-SNOW REMOVAL - We are also still in need of folks to help with snow removal, especially around the school.

At St. Mary School, we are perhaps looking for someone to oversee this for us and a number of folks to help with it when needed. Please contact Melissa in the school office (217)-773-2825 if you would be able to help out.

For Holy Family and St. Thomas, we normally have folks who graciously work to clear the sidewalks around the churches. If you are able to help out from time to time, please let me know.

-RESTORATION - The exterior restoration work at Holy Family continues to move along. As I've mentioned already, most of the brick work is suspended until spring because of the cold temperatures. However, work continues to be done of the roof, guttering, and bell tower. Some painting will also likely occur as weather permits. It is good to see the much needed work being completed.

We continue our Capital Campaign for this project. Your financial support is both appreciated and needed. Please also continue to keep this restoration work in your prayers. A reminder that I have placed this restoration work under the patronage of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

If you would like to make a contribution to the restoration work, there are envelopes in the back of Holy Family to do so or you can simply use an envelope clearly marked "Church restoration" and drop it in the collection basket or mail it in to the parish office. If you'd like to speak to me about a contribution, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your continued prayers for me, one another, our parishes and school, and the Universal Church. You remain in my prayers each day. May you have a most blessed week and Christmas Season!

-Fr. Aaron

**Announcements from the Holy Family Parish
Coordinator of Religious Education (Ann
O'Sullivan -aosullivan2031@gmail.com
or 217-257-2516)**

Bosco Kids

I pray you have a beautiful and blessed Christmas and New Year. Classes will resume on January 4, 2023 from 6:15-7:30 in the convent.

RCIA

RCIA classes are for those interested in learning more about the Catholic religion and/or coming into the Catholic Church. Please let me or Father Aaron know if you are interested in attending these classes or have any questions about the Catholic Faith. Classes continue on Wednesday evenings from 6:15-7:30 in the convent.

Youth Group

Due to the holidays, we will resume on January 8, 2023 at the KC Hall. We look forward to seeing all of our youth again.

Catholic Heart Work Camp is July 9-15 in Nashville, TN. We are working with St. Thomas Parish. Please let me know ASAP if you plan to attend. The registration fee is \$100 and we will raise funds for the rest of the cost.

Adult Faith Formation

Adult Faith Formation sessions on Unlocking the Mysteries of the Bible will resume in February for the last 5 sessions of the program. It is not too late to start!! You can easily catch up. Let me know if you would like the materials.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Holy Family Women's Guild is again accepting donations for Christmas poinsettias in memory of loved ones. Donations may be placed in the collection (*checks should be made payable to Holy Family Women's Guild*). Please include a note with the name of your loved ones.

RAGS & BAGS

St. Mary School is selling rags and bags. Dishcloths are 6 for \$12. Trash bags are \$22 per box - a box contains 100 bags that fit 30 gallon containers and have a thickness of

1.5 mil. Contact your favorite SMS student or call the office (773-2825) to purchase!

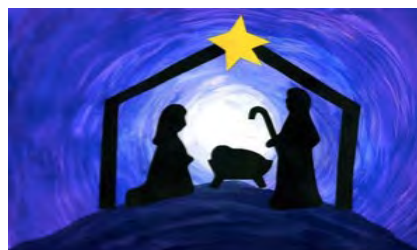
MT. STERLING CATHOLIC CEMETERY

The Mt. Sterling Catholic Cemetery will be closing their books for 2022 shortly. If you wish to make a contribution, please drop in the collection or mail to: Mt. Sterling Catholic Cemetery, P.O. Box 252, Mt. Sterling, IL 62353.

CHRISTMAS CARD ADDRESSES

Below are addresses for the convenience of those wishing to send Christmas cards to clergy and deacon:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fr. Aaron Kuhn P. O. Box 252 Mt. Sterling, IL 62353 | Deacon Mike Ellerman 2322 St. Charles Drive Quincy, IL 62305 |
| Fr. James O'Shea 1729 Dial Ct. Springfield, IL 62704 | Fr. John Beveridge 1017 Meadows Ct. Maryville, IL 62062 |
| Fr. Charles Edwards St. Jude Parish P.O. Box 47 Rochester, IL 62563 | Fr. John Sohm Aspen Creek 411 N. West St. Sullivan, IL 61952 |
| Fr. Stephen Thompson 2606 Washington Ave. Granite City, IL 62040 | Fr. David Beagles 202 South Lincoln Robinson, IL 62454 |
| Fr. John Patrick Day, C.P. c/o Passionist Monastery 1924 Newburg Road Louisville, KY 40205 | |



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mtsterlingmonuments@frontier.com
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RANDY E. FRESE
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Mount Sterling Implement
401 E Main St, Mt Sterling, IL
(217) 773-2216
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AL Andrew Likes
Construction
Owner
(217) 430-5696
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