



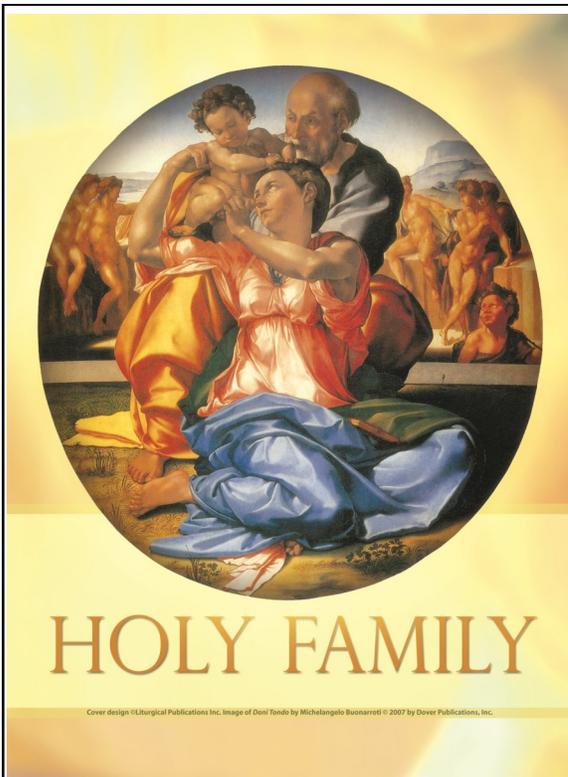
**Feast of the Holy Family —December 31, 2017**  
**SAINT MARY’S & SAINT ELIZABETH’S CATHOLIC CHURCHES**

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VICTOR DVORAK –DEACON

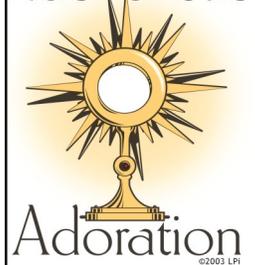


*“When the days were completed for their purification, according to the law of Moses, they took Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.”*

Families are incredibly busy today. Everyone in the family seems to move in every direction. Eating dinner together is practically impossible. Sadly, more and more families are too “busy” that the first thing to go is time for family prayer and Sunday worship. Our lifestyles could very much take a lesson from the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Surely, they had many of the same struggles as every family, trying to get everything accomplished. But, our Gospel today reminds us that the Holy Family lived their lives around faith rather than merely “scheduling” faith into their lives. Mary and Joseph presented their child Jesus to the priests of the Temple in Jerusalem, for being people of faith, they did everything in “accordance with the dictates of the Lord.” On this Feast of the Holy Family, we may want to renew our efforts to make our families grow in holiness. We love to shower our children with gifts at Christmas, but we should never forget the most treasured gift of faith. In fact, it is the only gift that your children will take with them when they leave this earth. Imitate the faith of the Holy Family in the life of your family, so that one day, your family can join them in offering everlasting praise to our one Father in heaven.

**Eucharistic**

**Ring in the New Year on a Spiritual Note**



Know that because it falls on a Monday this year, the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God is not a holy day of obligation this year. But, for those who want to begin the year with the Lord, through the maternal intercession of Mary the Mother of God, know that there will be a Holy Mass offered at Saint Mary’s on New Years Day at 10:30 a.m.

You are also welcome the night before, New Year’s Eve, to join us at Saint Mary’s for a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, beginning at 11:00 p.m. and concluding with a Benediction at midnight. What a beautiful way to begin 2108, with a blessing from the Lord Himself! After the Benediction, you are welcome to the rectory for champagne and cheesecake, as we continue to celebrate the New Year. We may also help each other formulate some New Year’s resolutions. I resolve to lift weights more often so that I can lift the heavy cream-laden kuchen that comes to my door (hint, hint).

**Thank You for Your Generosity**—I wish to thank you for your cards, gifts, pecuniary offerings, libations, baked goods, and above all, your prayers, with the celebration of Christmas. I am very grateful for your kindness and charity; may God reward you! I in turn will be offering a gift next Sunday (after each Mass) to each family, as an expression of my gratitude. But, my greatest gift is to offer my prayers on your behalf before the Creche in our churches. May the Christ Child bless your families with an abundance of His grace.

Oh, and by the way, some have asked if it’s too late to give the pastor some Christmas cookies. Of course not! You can drop them by any time and know that every time a pastor gets a dozen Christmas cookies, an angel gets its wings. I think that’s in the Bible somewhere.

## MASS & ADORATION SCHEDULE

**Monday, January 1**

10:30 AM SM—+Bridget Urlacher by SM Altar Guild

**Tuesday, January 2**

7:30 AM SM +Laura Grundhauser by Robert & Cely Stagl

**Wednesday, January 3**

7:00 PM SM— Rosary & Mother of Perpetual Help Devotions

7:00 PM SM— +Leland Doe by Richard Stagl

**Thursday, January 4**

7:30AM SM— Jack Friermood & family by Dave & Vivian Hernandez

**Friday, January 5**

7:30AM SM— Intention of SM Altar Guild by SM Altar Guild

12PM-3PM SM— Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

6:00-7:00PM SE—Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

7:00PM SE—Intention of SE Christian Mothers by SE Christian Mothers

**Saturday, January 6**

8:30 AM SM- +Adam Krebs & +Lyle Krebs by Gene & Judy Krebs

5:00 PM SM—+Kyle Binstock, +Joe & +Ida Binstock, +James & +Inez

Hanson by Victor & Diane Binstock

**Sunday, January 7**

8:30AM SE +Paul Schiwal by Louis & Jean Braun

10:30AM SM-Pro Populo

***Please Keep in Your Prayers:***

Harvey Herberholz, Patty Frank, Andy Prokop, Henley Johnson, Duane Grundhauser, Pete Schaefer, Alice Candrian, Jeff Hewson, Marilyn Jacobs, Leo Heck, Ross Thomas, Arlene Rohr, Brenda Barton, Elven Kaufman, Suzette Printz, Linda Reisenauer, Rose Krebs (SE), Russ Lefor, Lori Lefor, Herbert Emmil, Reggie Gentz, Cindy Martin, Tim Theil, Howard Schiwal, Theresa Decker, Alyssa Binstock, Yvonne Fettig, Dale Reindel, Kim Kuhn, Don Miller, Shari Obritsch, Charlotte Krebs, Eugenia Stagl, Katherine Splichal, Bonnie (Krebs) Dick, Dorothy Kohl, Colleen Churchill, Thresiamma (Fr. Biju's mom)

**Assisted Living and Nursing Home Residents:** Ken Stagl, Archie Jalbert, Benny Benz, Joan Binstock, Joe Wandler, Sylvia Koppinger, Mike Urlacher, Leona Gordon, Ardelle Kovar, Joan Madler, Cecelia Jung, Donnella Koppinger, Marilyn Jeske, Willie Emmil, Frances Heick, Dale Schroeder

**Our Deceased Loved Ones** + Keith Herold +Carla Rohan+Alvin Rotering +Jeanne Kovar +Bridget Urlacher, +Laura Grundhauser, +Florian Urlacher +Paul Schiwal, + LeRoy Jacobs +Victor Roller +John Herold, + Viola Martin + Viola Neprash +Maggie Schoch, +Rose Lefor, + Mary Ficek + June Stockert +Adeline Bogner +Vern Honeymann, +Kasper Heidt, +Caroline Pechtl, +Jacob Frank

**On the Lighter Side (Christmas humor)**

You know you are getting older when Santa Claus starts looking younger.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ **SM Coming Together Sunday January 7** following the 10:30am Mass. Everyone is welcome
- ◆ **SE will be having a Pro-life Mass and breakfast** Sunday, January 14th after 8:30 am Mass. Everyone is welcome.
- ◆ **SE January Church cleaners** are Michelle Wax, Haylee Wax, and Delinda Kaufman.
- ◆ **SE parishioner's** please check the schedule for Sunday snow removal.

### St. Mary's Liturgical Assignments January 6 & 7

MINISTRY	Saturday 5PM	Sunday 10:30AM
Lector	Lori Fitterer	John Ehlis
Mass Servers	Zach J./Zach M.	Matthew B./Brock E.
Eucharistic Ministers	Leonard B./Bonnie J.	Dianne B./Mary F.
Gifts	Philip & Clem Urlacher	Ruth Fitterer
Rosary Leader	Kathy Gartner	Mary Fitterer
Greeters	Kathy & Leonard G.	Helen Koppinger
Homebound Minister	Reenie T.	Reenie T.

### St. Elizabeth's Liturgical Assignments January 7

Lector	Elvie
Mass Servers	Elizabeth
Eucharistic Ministers	Darrell & Arlene
Gifts	Amanda & Dustin
Greeters	Trish & Craig
Ushers	Elvie & Dennis W.

### Prayer for the New Year

Dear Lord, at the beginning of this New Year, I remember that you are a God of beginnings and endings. You created the world, with all its eternal patterns. Winter begins in frost, and ends in Spring's thaw. Spring begins in new, green life, ending in Summer's heat. Summer begins in sunshine, and ends in Autumn's breezes. And Autumn's color leads to the white of Winter again. As another year ends and begins in our lives, help us to remember that you have made a world of cycles. When fortune turns to trials, or hardship turns to joy, help me take delight in the life I've received from you. Remind me that I will one day pass from this world and enter a new life like those who've gone before me. Amen.



## **Catholic Devotions, *Pious Visits to the Creche***

In the Christmas season, no image speaks more of the celebration of our Savior's birth than the Creche, the Nativity scene. Yet, sadly, it is often treated like a mere holiday "decoration", one more item we have to put in place before Christmas. You can't have Christmas without the Christmas tree, the dancing snowman, and the Creche! But, this sacred image is more than just holiday décor; it is a form of prayer and a devotion to the Incarnate Lord, the Infant Jesus.

The Creche has its origin with Saint Francis of Assisi, who in the year 1223 celebrated Christmas in a way the world had never seen before. In the Italian village of Greccio, Saint Francis had a friend and supporter, John Vellita, who had given the friars a cave within the cliffs above Greccio. Saint Francis had intended to use it as a hermitage, a humble dwelling for him and his confreres. But then in prayer, God inspired Saint Francis to use the cave for another purpose: a Nativity scene for Christmas.

Saint Francis told John Vellita of his plans: the cave had to have a manger with hay; there had to be an ox and an ass, just as in Bethlehem; and the roles of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph would be played by the poor of the village, to remind them of their great dignity in the eyes of our Lord.

At Midnight on Christmas Eve, Saint Francis and His friars came together to celebrate the festival of Christmas. All carried lighted torches and made their way to the Creche within the cave. The Holy Mass was celebrated over the manger, which served as an altar, so that the child Jesus, seen in the stable at Bethlehem, would be seen in the Sacred Host and the Precious Blood. After the reception of Holy Communion, Saint Francis stepped forward and took the little child in the manger and held him lovingly in his arms. The little child smiled at Saint Francis and stroked his bearded chin, moving Saint Francis to speak eloquently and devoutly about the love of the child from Bethlehem, who smiles down from heaven on those who love him and honor Him.

The cave of Greccio became a lasting sanctuary in honor of the Creche and a permanent altar was set up within it. Saint Francis stated, "Where the dumb animals formerly ate hay out of the manger, there men now receive the spotless Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gives us His Body and Blood as not mere food, but as the food leading to eternal life."

The Creche of Greccio became known far and wide and Pope Honorius III encouraged all Catholic cities and villages to create a similar Nativity scene in their city square and in the city church. In time, the Creche was set up within Catholic homes as well, as a means of devotion to honor the Christ Child, who blesses every home where He is honored. The Christ Child is placed within the Creche only on Christmas Eve and the Three Magi are placed within the Creche on the Feast of the Epiphany. Every day, before the family retires for the day, it is a pious tradition to pray before the Infant Jesus in the Creche, that He may bless each family with His love and peace.

In this Christmas season, make a prayerful visit to the Creche inside and outside of our churches. Offer a prayer every day before the Creche in our homes as well. Humble yourself in the presence of the Christ Child, so that He may bless you and your families with His great love. As the beloved Christmas hymn, *Away in a Manger*, reminds us: "Be near me Lord Jesus I ask Thee to stay, close by me forever and love me I pray."

### **The Bells of Saint Mary's**

One of the greatest treasures of Saint Mary's Parish is the beautiful church bells that ring before Mass and throughout the day to announce the *Angelus*. A recent assessment of our bells by the Verdin Company (who installed the bells in 1961) places the value of the bells at over \$50,000. To install similar bells today, with the hardware, bells, crane, etc. would cost over \$125,000! Indeed, we have a treasure in these bells, both material and spiritual.

But sadly, the strikers, motors, and swinging mechanisms have met their lifespan and need to be replaced. The current parts are obsolete, so fixing them piece-meal is really not an option; all need to be replaced with modern up-to-date components. The cost for this project is \$8,750. As our budget is tight, we may have to make this effort an appeal; if you wish to give to the restoration of the bells' apparatus, any gift, small or large, would be most welcome. Consider it a Christmas gift to our parish, our family of faith.

If you wish to make an offering towards this effort, please call or stop by Father Gary's office or the parish office. You may also drop a donation in the collection basket with a note in the cheque memo, "Church Bells". I look forward to hearing the bells once again in all of their glory, and no, not for the reason some have postulated: because the pastor is a real ding-a-ling!

### **A Point to Ponder**

*The only things we keep are actually those things that we give away.*