



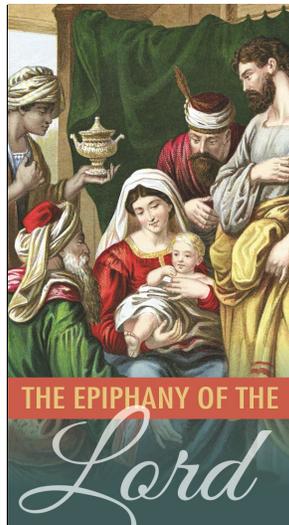
The Epiphany of the Lord—January 7, 2018  
**SAINT MARY’S & SAINT ELIZABETH’S CATHOLIC CHURCHES**

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VICTOR DVORAK –DEACON



***“Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem saying, ‘Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw His star at its rising and have come to do Him homage.’”***

Early Christians considered the gifts of the Magi to be highly symbolic: gold is the “king of metals” and is therefore symbolic of Jesus’ *kingship*. Frankincense is used in worship and is therefore symbolic of Jesus’ *divinity*. Lastly, myrrh is used in burials and is symbolic of Jesus, *humanity*. If we were to receive from Jesus one gift to symbolize the role we would like Him to play in our lives, what might that gift be? On the Feast of the Epiphany, pray to the Holy Spirit to recognize the many epiphanies (manifestations), spiritual gifts to be more exact, that God sends us every day. If we were prayerfully attentive every day, we would be overwhelmed how often God comes to visit us and make Himself known. These gifts of divine grace are not gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but they are indeed more valuable and they assist us on our way to an even greater gift . . . eternal life in the Kingdom.

**The Magi, The Wise Men, The Three Kings**

The Three Magi, somewhat mysterious figures from the East, have long been the subject of Catholic art and spiritual literature. No one knows how many Magi there actually were, because the Gospels don’t give an exact number. Some Eastern medieval lists have as many as twelve Magi, but in western Europe, Catholics have traditionally celebrated the Three Magi: Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. An unknown writer of the late Medieval period even provided a description of the Three Magi: Gaspar was young, beardless, and of ruddy complexion; Melchior was an old man with white hair and a long white beard; and Balthazar was black-skinned and heavily bearded.

An ancient and revered Catholic tradition for the Feast of the Epiphany is truly spiritual and quite moving. Parishioners dress up as the Three Magi and come to the rectory of the parish priest. They don’t present gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but instead kuchen, blatchinda, and pfeffernusse. What a beautiful custom! I pray that we can revive it in our parish boundaries!

**A Gift for You**

I know the weather last Sunday was brutally cold and prudently, some parishioners stayed home for their personal safety. Yet, I did hand out a Christmas gift to each household and I would like for you to have one as well. Please let me know and I will get one of these gifts to you. I guess if I do have leftovers, my family is gathering on Epiphany Sunday for our Christmas celebration and in imitation of the gift-giving of the Three Kings, I could give a mug with candy to each of my three brothers, the Three Wise Guys.

**Ring Christmas Bells!**

In the spirit of Christmas giving, two households of Saint Mary’s Parish have graciously offered to pay for the church bells restoration project. We are very grateful for their generous gift and we can’t wait until May, when the Verdin Company will come to restore the mechanisms for the bells. Again, thank you to these two families; may God reward you for your generous gift. Know that the bells will be programmed for a number of usages: to call people to the prayer of the Holy Mass; to toll for funeral liturgies; to announce the Angelus thrice daily; to toll the Divine Mercy Hour of Christ’s death on the Cross; and to joyfully ring when homemade caramel rolls show up on the rectory doorstep. It will be so spiritual!

## MASS & ADORATION SCHEDULE

**Monday, January 8**

**7:30 AM SM—Communion Service**

**Tuesday, January 9**

**7:30 AM SM —Communion Service**

**Wednesday, January 10**

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

**7:00 PM SM– Communion Service**

**Thursday, January 11**

**7:30AM SM– Communion Service**

**Friday, January 12**

**7:30AM SM– Communion Service**

**12PM-3PM SM– Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

**Saturday, January 13**

**8:30 AM SM—+Mary Ficek by family**

**5:00 PM SM-+Jeanne Kovar by Josie Heidt**

**Sunday, January 14**

**8:30AM SE +Ralph Messmer by a friend**

**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**

If the Three Wise Men would have been Three Wise Women, things would have unfolded differently: they would have regularly asked for directions; they would have arrived on time; they would have helped deliver the baby; they would have cleaned the stable; they would have made a casserole; and they would have brought practical gifts.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SM Coming Together Sunday—** Jan.14 after 10:30 AM Mass.

**SE—**Thank you to all who helped decorate the church for the Christmas season. It was beautiful! We will be taking down the crib & Christmas decorations after church on Sunday, Jan.7th, after 8:30 am mass. Everyone's help would be appreciated.

**SE Pro-life breakfast** Sunday, Jan. 14th after 8:30 am Mass.

**SE Coffee & rolls Jan. 21;** Michelle Wax, Haylee Wax & Delinda Kaufman are on for coffee and rolls & church cleaning.

### St. Mary's Liturgical Assignments January 13 & 14

MINISTRY	Saturday 5 PM	Sunday 10:30AM
Lector	Connie Jalbert	Susan Schmitt
Mass Servers	Jim K./Braden R.	Kayla E./Katie S.
Eucharistic Ministers	Toni J./Martina S.	David H./Vivian H.
Gifts	Richard Wandler	Larry & Betty Heick
Rosary Leader	Richard Wandler	Ann Wandler
Greeters	Vickie Herberholz	Victor & Lynn Dvorak
Homebound Minister	Martina Stagl	Martina Stagl

### St. Elizabeth's Liturgical Assignments January 14

Lector	Arlene
Mass Servers	Nathan
Eucharistic Ministers	Fran & Cindy
Gifts	Trish & Elvie
Greeters	Trish & Craig
Ushers	Elvie & Dennis W.

**Away for a Spell**

I will be away from our parishes this coming week, from January 9<sup>th</sup>-January 12<sup>th</sup>, visiting family and friends. Please contact the parish office in the event of a pastoral emergency and you will be put into contact with a priest. Be assured of my prayers for you daily, even when I am away from the parishes.

**Thanks** to everyone who attended my 95th birthday party!! It was a wonderful day and I'm deeply touched by all the well wishes. May God bless you all. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Josie Heidt.

**A Point to Ponder**

*Decisions can take you out of God's will,  
but never out of His reach.*

## Catholic Devotions, A Means for Salvation

*Before we address this week's Catholic devotion, maybe we need to discuss why we are revisiting these devotions. It is largely because these hallowed Catholic devotions have been largely neglected and even forgotten. Sadly, many Catholics see them as "relics" of the past and fail to see their spiritual significance. Because of this, many souls have been led away from God, because these devotions are rooted in Sacred Scripture, the Blessed Trinity, and the Church. Therefore, with the good of souls in mind, we will revisit these time-honored Catholic Devotions. If a renewed dedication to one or more of these devotions ultimately leads us to heaven, then it is worth our time and effort.*

### The Brown Scapular: Our Lady's Garment

In an apparition to Saint Simon Stock, a Carmelite, the Blessed Mother made the following promise: "Whosoever dies clothed in the scapular shall not suffer eternal fire." Such is the extraordinary promise Our Lady makes to those who wear her Brown Scapular. This wonderful promise makes the Scapular one of the most powerful sacramentals in the life of the Church.

Who would doubt Our Lady's promise, or be so foolish as not to wear with profound gratitude and reverence this abbreviated form of the Carmelite mantle? This garment of grace--two simple pieces of brown wool connected by cords or chains and worn over the shoulders---is a tangible sign of the Blessed Mother's love and protection of her devotees. We should kiss the scapular devoutly when rising in the morning and every time we put on a new scapular to replace one that is worn or damaged. In doing so, we ask Our Lady, "Preserve me this day from sin and the occasions of sin." Wearing the scapular with devotion is a way to consecrate ourselves to her service. Consecration sets apart a person or thing for a sacred purpose. Every Catholic should be consecrated to Mary. Simply wearing a scapular tells Mary that we venerate her, we love her, and we trust in her maternal love at every moment of the day.

The origins of the Scapular go back to the Carmelite hermits of Mount Carmel in the Holyland. Due to the rise of Islam and the dangers it posed to Christians, the community of hermits decided to leave Palestine. In 1224, they transferred their hermitage to Aylesford, England. Saint Simon Stock was the Superior General of the Carmelite Order for men when this transfer occurred.

Weighed down by external persecutions from malevolent elements of the Church and internal dissensions within the Carmelite community, the ninety-year old Simon Stock had retired to his cell (i.e., his monastic room) to be alone. On July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1251, he poured out his heart to the Blessed Mother and asked her to help him and all the Carmelites. Then, accompanied by a multitude of angels, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him, holding in her hands the scapular of the Carmelite Order, and said, "This shall be to you and all the Carmelites a privilege that anyone who dies clothed in this Scapular shall not suffer eternal fire." The full Carmelite scapular is made of brown wool, is about fourteen inches wide, and is worn down to the knees in the front and back. Saint Simon Stock established the Confraternity of Mount Carmel shortly after the apparition and thus the promise of eternal salvation was extended to the Carmelite Confraternity members who died wearing the Carmelite Scapular. Already by 1276, the diminished form of the Scapular existed and was worn by many Catholics, including popes, priests, and lay people alike.

Most Catholics today have been enrolled in the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, normally on the day of their First Holy Communion. Yet, sadly, few continue to wear it beyond that day, which is to their loss. They lose an opportunity to be protected from spiritual dangers; they bypass the peace and consolation it brings to the soul, being placed under the protective mantle of Our Lady; and they set aside an amazing spiritual gift that would spare them from the unquenchable fires of hell. As a pastor, I pray that Catholics may grow in humility and childlike trust, thus viewing the Scapular not merely as a pious practice for Catholic babushkas, but as a spiritual lifeline to Christ through Mary.

When someone you love is dying, please make sure they are clothed with the Scapular. Spared from the fires of hell, one day they will shower you with gratitude when you are reunited with them in heaven. God bless all of you who faithfully wear the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. You are truly on the path to salvation in heaven, with our Blessed Mother as your guide and advocate every step of the journey.

