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of MILWAUKEE

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WELCOME TO OUR SPECIAL TWO-PARTER NEWSLETTER!

I'm excited to continue the exciting two-parter format for our special Winter 2021 *Hand in Hand* Newsletter! Again, the format of this Newsletter is unique in the sense that this is divided into two halves: the first half is focused on Advent, while the second half is to be saved until the Christmas season. **Make sure you do not peek** into the Christmas part of this Newsletter in the same way that you do not peek and open presents under the tree before Christmas officially begins at 4 p.m. on Dec. 24, or Christmas morning! Wink wink!

I hope you will enjoy the many things this unique two-parter Newsletter has to offer to you!

The Immaculate Conception, patroness of our country, pray for us! St. John the Evangelist, patron of our archdiocese, pray for us! St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of the Deaf, pray for us! St. René Goupil, our Deaf saint, pray for us! Blessed Alexandre Planas Saurí, pray for us!

A Blessed Advent and Christmas seasons to you! Stay warm, safe and healthy! God bless!

FR. CK CORNER: DON'T OVERLOOK THE ADVENT WREATH



Happy New Year!
Hard to believe the first season of our new Church Year finally arrived. The one thing I really love about our Catholic faith is that there is always a purpose to every little thing. There is never something in our Catholic Churches that do not have meaning. This brings us to the Advent season — a season so rich with symbolism and meaning, yet often overlooked due to December being one of the busiest months of the year.

One of the things that I truly love about the Advent season is the memorable Advent wreath. While visiting various parishes over the past many years, it is always amazing to see how big some



Advent wreaths can be ... I never really saw two of the same Advent wreaths — which makes them unique. Yet at the same time, Advent wreaths all have the same parts. Here in this article, let's look at what each part symbolizes, so that we can

► **FR. CK'S CORNER - Continued on Page 2.**

MISSION STATEMENT - DEAF APOSTOLATE

The Deaf Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee exists to enable all Catholic Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to participate fully in the liturgical, educational, pastoral, spiritual, and human concerns ministries in the Church.

► FR. CK'S CORNER - Continued from Page 1.

appreciate its beauty more.

First, the wreath is in a shape of a circle, which means eternity and infinity, which is what Christ brings to us. Second, the wreath is always made from pine evergreens, which shows immortality, and is different from the autumn leaves that fall, die and decay. Third, sometimes wreaths can include small red berries, which symbolize Christ's Blood shed for each one of us. Fourth, pinecones that decorate the wreath are a symbol of Christ's Resurrection. Last, but not least, the wreath has four candles, which each (when lit) represent Jesus as the Light of the world. The four candles also represent the four weeks of Advent. The three purple candles represent prayer, penance, and preparation as well as royalty in which we await the King of kings: Jesus. On the third Sunday of Advent, we light the rose-colored candle which symbolizes rejoicing, as it marks the halfway point of the Advent season.

The four candles often have a theme, in which slightly varies for the second and fourth Sundays. The first purple candle represents hope. The third rose-colored candle represents joy. But the second and fourth purple candles vary in specific themes of faith, peace and love.

What is not often known is that the first purple candle is also called the "Prophet's Candle." The first candle reminds us of the promises shared by the prophets that a Savior will be sent to us. The second purple candle is called the "Bethlehem Candle," as it reminds us of the journey of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph to Bethlehem, as well as the promise of the humble birth of Jesus Christ there. The third rose-colored candle is called the "Shepherd's Candle," as it reminds us of the joy that Christ came for all people, including the poor and overlooked shepherds, and that Jesus is The Shepherd. The fourth purple candle is called the "Angel's Candle," as it reminds us of the announcement by the angels that Emmanuel, meaning "God with us," has arrived!

Do you have an Advent wreath at home? It is a beautiful way to maintain the Advent spirit in your home during the Advent season. Many Advent candles are becoming available as electrical or battery-operated candles, which can make it safer at home.

May the richness of the Advent wreath inspire you to grow deeper in hunger, desire and greater appreciation for the coming of Our Savior, Jesus Christ!



CATHOLIC QUIZ (ADVENT)

1. Advent begins what?

- The shopping season
- A new liturgical year
- The countdown of NFL playoffs
- Part one of the Christmas Season

2. Advent lasts _____.

- 40 days
- until the Christmas sales end
- until the groundhog appears
- four weeks

3. Jesus' cousin's name is _____?

- Elijah
- Joseph
- John the Baptist
- Peter

4. Who announced to Mary that she was chosen to be Christ's mother?

- St. Gabriel
- St. Michael
- St. Raphael
- Her holy guardian angel

5. "Emmanuel" means what?

- Savior
- God with us
- God and man
- Prophet



(Answers on page 10.)



St. Andrew Parish

DEAF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINISTRY

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER: ADVENT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEDITATE



**By Jennifer Paul, Coordinator
Deaf Religious Education
& Deaf Ministry
St. Andrew Parish, Delavan**

In last year's Advent issue (Winter 2020), I talked about how preparing for Christmas is like preparing

for a special guest to dinner. Advent is our spiritual preparation for Jesus' coming. For this year, I would like to look at Advent from an additional perspective – it is a time of not only preparation but also of meditation. Now what does meditation mean?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church #2708 defines meditation as:

Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in lectio divina or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him.

The Advent season is a perfect opportunity for meditation. Meditation with the heart focused on Jesus could be done by anyone and anywhere. Our Deaf Religious Education students have done beautiful meditation by listening intently – with their hearts engaged – about the life and

times of Jesus, his teachings, the Church's tradition, and understanding how special the waiting is before Christmas. This understanding is a critical foundation to leading a Catholic life and continuously meditating their heritage as God's children for the rest of their lives.

Meditation for adult Catholics and families could mean attending the four Advent Sundays before Christmas Day: Nov. 28, Dec. 5, Dec. 12, and Dec. 19. Attending Mass is an opportunity to seclude yourself from the superficial, commercial urgency of the secular world and sit in a deep, humble meditation, listening (eye-listening!) to the lectionary readings, reflecting on the Homily and most important of all, taking the Holy Eucharist. By the way, we are blessed that on every Advent Sunday in Delavan this year, St. Andrew's 9 a.m. Mass will be interpreted. It is a beautiful blessing, and I most definitely would meditate on that blessing during Advent.

For Catholic families and individuals at home, the circle of Advent candles is an excellent way for us to meditate on a weekly basis. It is a good idea to designate a specific site in your home for the Advent wreath and its candles.

Once it is all set up, it becomes exciting to get into the meditation process every week. At the start of every week, we light (or turn on the tea light flicker) the candle. We pause then to meditate, using the focus of the week associated with the color as a starting point: purple for hope, purple for faith, rose for joy and then purple again for peace.

► FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER - Continued on Page 5.

MODEL SAINT FOR ADVENT: ST. ELIZABETH

By Fr. Christopher Klusman

Why would St. Elizabeth be a great model saint for us during the Advent season? It has to do with her example upon the arrival of her most-famous cousin, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the Gospel of Luke 1:41-45. This passage is what we often pray as the second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary called the Visitation. This occurred right after the Archangel Gabriel's appearance to the Blessed Virgin Mary and told her to be the Mother of the Son of God. We know that the Blessed Mother then went quickly to visit Elizabeth, whom she was told was six months pregnant. Their encounter is an incredible event in itself:

Mary then visited Elizabeth, and her baby leapt in her womb. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth proclaimed to Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my



Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" (Luke 1:39-45)

Incredible is the fact that St. John the Baptist, who wasn't even born yet, was already serving in his role as prophet, telling his mother that the Lord Jesus Christ is arriving inside his Blessed Mother. St. Elizabeth rejoiced and warmly welcomed both Jesus and his Blessed Mother.

This event reminds us of the importance of being pro-life, in which all life from the moment of conception is sacred. For people to say that from the moment of conception is nothing human and/or just a blob of tissue is a tragedy. St. John the Baptist prophesized within his mother's womb. St. Elizabeth acknowledged the arrival of the King of kings within the blessed womb of Mary. You can see the beautiful images in this article that shows sacred human lives within their wombs.

So, who is this St. Elizabeth, who is often referred to as St. Elizabeth of the Visitation? She is revealed in the Gospel of Luke. She is from the line of Aaron, Moses' brother.

She is also the wife of Zechariah. But both Zechariah and Elizabeth were childless. We all know of the infamous event of Zechariah going into the Holy of Holies in the Temple and being told by the Archangel Gabriel that his wife, in their old age, will be pregnant! As a result, Zechariah was made mute because he doubted the Archangel's message. Let's look at this Scripture passage:

Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born" (Luke 1:13-15).

While we know that Our Lady went to stay with the both of them for three months. St. Elizabeth gave birth to the famous Advent saint, St. John the Baptist! We know that God chose the name of St. John the Baptist to



be John — not Zechariah as was the custom, for there was no "John" in Elizabeth's family. When Zechariah stepped forward to share what God wanted of their new son, his speech was restored! From that time on, we don't really know what happened to both of them.

This is why St. Elizabeth is a great model saint for us during this Advent season. The Advent season is also a great time for us to think of the Blessed Mother as pregnant and imagine that we wait with joy and excitement alongside the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph (as well as St. Elizabeth) for the upcoming great event of Jesus' Birth!

With Jesus within Our Lady's womb, we rejoice, welcome

► ST. ELIZABETH - Continued on Page 5.

In St. John's School for the Deaf's publications of the "Our Young People," there is a section that has their current news. I hope you will enjoy these various news clippings:

News of St. John's



This year the eve of St. Nicholas was commemorated with a movie. On St. Nicholas day, December 6th, the older children were privileged to attend the matinee performance of the Skating Vanities at the Arena. This was through the kindness of "Zip" Morgan and members of the Optimist Club.

January 1953

There are more ways than one to break a toothbrush. One of our three year old boys broke his while vigorously brushing his teddy bear's teeth!

December 1955

► FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER - Continued from Page 3.

When you think about it (more meditation!), the candles, one by one every week, are lit against the darkness, and the world becomes brighter and brighter and finally is at its brightest with the arrival of Jesus the Christ on Christmas Day:

You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).

At last, but not least, reading the Holy Bible is a wonderful gift to help us meditate on the mysteries of the faith and the "interior knowledge of our Lord." Like children enjoying the daily chocolate nugget from the Advent Calendar, we can be playful and flip open a page from the Holy Bible and read a chapter during Advent. It is like when a person does not know where to go for their vacation, they would spin the world globe and stop the swirl by randomly pressing their finger on a random spot. Wherever the finger lands would be the vacation spot. With the Holy Bible, we can 'fan out' the pages and poke our finger in to stop at one page to read. Meditate on the page and you can even share what you read with people around you and with Fr. Christopher Klusman and/or Fr. Oriol. Oftentimes when I do that, I am marveled by how the wisdom nugget on the "random page" is just what I needed to read at the time!

All in seriousness though, it is a good activity to get a daily nugget from the Holy Bible throughout Advent. Maybe you would enjoy it so much that you keep "playing" for all seasons! Happy Advent!

Farmer, pulling with one mule: "Giddap Peter! Giddap Barney! Giddap Johnny! Giddap Bill!"

Stranger: "How many names does that mule have?"

Farmer: "His name's Pete, but he don't know his own strength; so I put blinders on 'im, yell a lot o' names, an' he thinks a lot o' other mules are helping 'im."



► ST. ELIZABETH - Continued from Page 4.

and stay with Jesus and his Mother during Advent. We think about how many gifts that Jesus brings to our lives — past, present and future. We think during this Advent season of the words and actions of St. Elizabeth and her famous son, St. John the Baptist. We can also thank God for St. John the Baptist being a light during the darkness of Advent and how he led the way of preparation for the arrival of the Light himself, Jesus Christ. And that we thank God for the gift of our baptisms.

St. Elizabeth of the Visitation's feast day is Nov. 5.

St. Elizabeth of the Visitation, pray for us!



THE GIVING MANGER SET

One of the most beautiful ways to prepare for Christmas during the Advent season is to do the Giving Manger Set. I hope you will enjoy this brief explanation from the Catholic Company on this wonderful tradition that not many people know of, and perhaps try this for every Advent season. Thankfully, this tradition was shared to me by Patty Kostechka, who often shared this with her Catholic Deaf Students during her years teaching Catholic Religious Education at St. Andrew in Delavan, Wisconsin.

How does this work? The Giving Manger (from the [Catholic Company](#)) comes with a book, a manger, a bundle of “straw” and an adorable baby Jesus.

Any person could read the story... to help get [anyone] excited for the Advent season.

Then, during the weeks leading up to Christmas, kids (and adults!) can perform simple acts of generosity and kindness or offer up little sacrifices.

Each time an act of generosity or kindness is made, add a piece of straw to the wooden manger.

When Christmas arrives, there will be a cozy resting place for



the newborn King, and your family can place baby Jesus in his manger!

As the Christmas season unfolds, your hearts and home will be filled with more joy and love than ever before.

This tradition will become a family favorite year after year and will create some of your most cherished Christmas memories.

The Giving Manger Gift Set includes: (1) **A book** with a heartwarming story to explain the tradition and get your kids excited to start; (2) **A wooden manger** to placed in a visible spot in your home, waiting to be filled; (3) **A bundle of straw** to place a piece in the manger after each act of service; and (4) **A baby Jesus** to be place in the manger (now full of love and sacrifices) on Christmas Day.

With all the excitement of Santa Claus and presents, the true meaning of Christmas can get blurred. But with The Giving Manger, your whole family can rejoice in the birth of Jesus! Celebrate the true meaning of Christmas by starting a new Advent tradition with yourself and/or your family!

[SOLEMNITY] OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Since Dec. 8 is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception that occurs during the Advent season, I hope you will enjoy this article borrowed from "From Our Young People," December 1960:

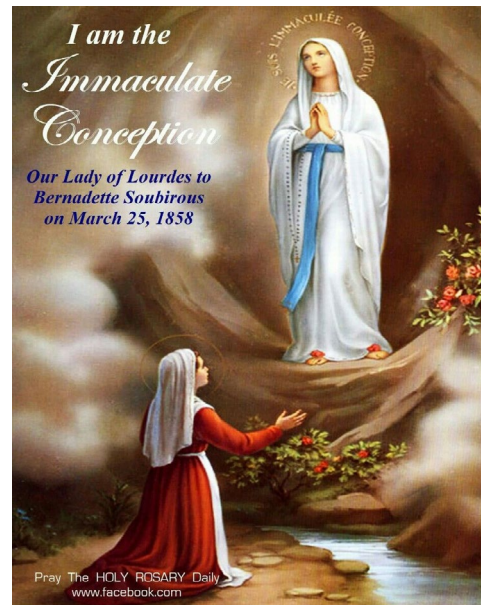
THIS feast of Our Blessed Mother, which falls on December 8th, is one of the most beautiful of the many festivals of the Blessed Virgin the Church observes throughout the year. When sin entered into the world, it brought with it sorrow, disease, pain and death, and on most of our festivals, no matter how glorious they might be, there is a minor note in the ecstatic chants that recalls us to these sorrowful things. But the feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception tells us that when God chose her who was to be the living tabernacle, the nursing mother, the only earthly parent of Jesus Christ – of that Eternal Word, God of God, Light of Light – He determined that not for one moment



should the slightest trace of even original sin rest upon her.

By a special decree of His omnipotent will, He exempted her from the curse and stain of the forefather Adam; and from the very first moment of her existence, she was sinless, stainless, immaculate. This dogma of the Church is often misunderstood outside her pale. People think that it refers to the virgin birth of Jesus Christ rather than to His mother's spotless, unmarred and unclouded holiness from the first moment of her being.

She is like the most spotless lily, whiter than the untrodden snow, purer than the clearest sky, more brilliant than the radiant stars. She is



like the pure, fine gold of the chalice, the immaculate linen of the corporal, where the sacramental God rests; but she is holier than these. Her feast is heaven-like with the beautiful holiness of that spotless human tabernacle in which the true Holy of Holies vouchsafed to dwell.

WOMEN OF CHRIST 2021 CONFERENCE A SUCCESS!

The interpreted 14th Women of Christ Conference Nov. 6 at Washington County Fair Park was a success. With the presentations, Mass and much more, the women — including those



of the Deaf community — felt the downpour of "God's love and delight." The Office of the Deaf Apostolate is truly grateful for their hospitality in welcoming the Catholic Deaf women with open arms and doing all they can to make this an amazing experience for everyone involved!

Blessed Mother Mary, pray for us!



A REWARD FROM A KING (A LEGEND)

Here is a beautiful story borrowed from "Our Young People: The Friend of the Deaf," January 1958 issue.

Joseph knocked at the door of the little cottage at the end of the street. There had been no room at the inn. Perhaps the people who lived here would let them stay for the night.

A man came to the door.

"What do you wish?" he asked.

How kind he seemed to be, Joseph thought. The man at the inn had been very busy and very cross.

"We have come from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census," Joseph told the man. "We have traveled all day and are very tired. Have you a room to spare?"

The man looked at Mary. "How beautiful she is," he thought. "What a pity it is that these travelers cannot find a place to stay for the night."

"My house is small and crowded," the man answered. "Two of my children are sick. I wish I could give you a room, but you see I cannot. But," and here the man paused, a little ashamed, "I have a stable nearby. You may stay there. I will bring you something to eat and fresh straw for your bed."

Joseph thanked the man, and he and Mary went to the stable. Soon the man appeared with some food. "It's not much," said the man, "but it's all the food we had left. You are welcome to it."

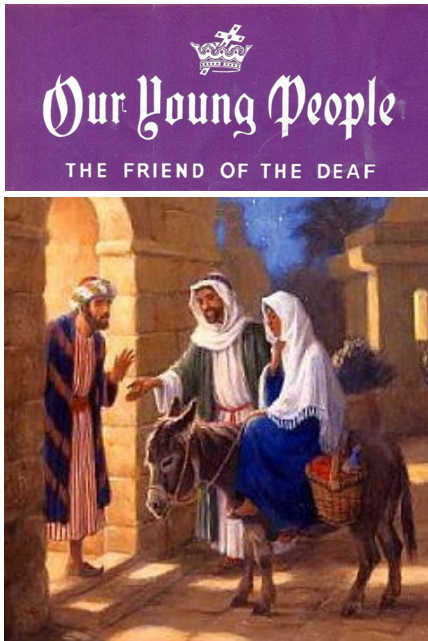
He left the stable and returned a few minutes later with some fresh straw. Joseph noticed that he was using only one hand. The other was hurt so he could not move it.

The man saw Joseph look at his hand. "I hurt it while I was working in my shop," he explained. "You see, I was a carpenter."

"A carpenter!" said Joseph. "I am a carpenter, too." He felt sorry for the man. He knew that if a carpenter had an accident like that he could no longer follow his trade.

"Yes," said the man, "I used to make a living for my family by my work as a carpenter. But now I can do it no longer."

That night the man awoke and heard music – soft, sweet music, such as he had never heard before. He arose and went to the window. The stable was surrounded by a strange light. He dressed quickly and went to the stable. Joseph and Mary were kneeling beside the manger. Some shepherds were kneeling in front of it. In the manger lay a tiny Babe. Suddenly the man knew, without



being told, that this was the Redeemer who had come to save the world. He fell onto his knees.

The time came for Joseph and Mary to leave the stable. They were saying good-by to the man who had been so kind to them. Mary was holding the Babe in her arms.

"Thank you for everything you have done for us," said Joseph. "I wish we could reward you."

Suddenly the child in Mary's arms lifted His tiny hand. A strange feeling came over the man. He looked down at his hand. It was healed. A miracle! Falling down, he adored the Christ Child.

The Holy Family left, and the man never saw them again. But he was always thankful that he had not turned away the two poor travelers who came to him seeking shelter.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR THE DEAF (NCOD) 2022 CONFERENCE

The National Catholic Office for the Deaf (NCOD) Conference will take place **Jan. 6-10, 2022**, in Savannah, Georgia. Please keep NCOD in your prayers for successful preparation and conference.

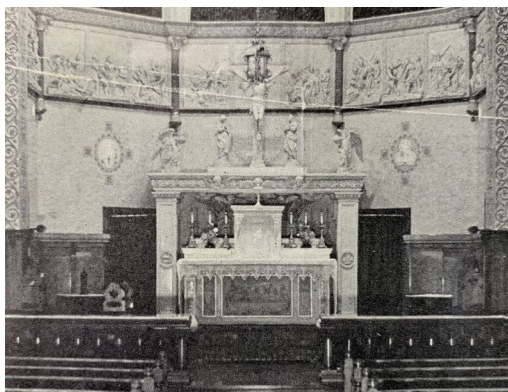


OUR DAY BEGINS AT 6:30 (A.M.): THIS IS OUR DAY

Begun in the previous Fall 2019 Newsletter, an article/feature was chosen from an older Hand in Hand Newsletter to revisit important people, events and places in our rich history. But, we will expand onto other older issues. This one is taken from the St. John's Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 2, April 1964. Enjoy!

It's 6:30 a.m. and our day starts with the ringing of bells and the flashing of lights. Some of the boys hear the bell or notice the light, but not me – I just keep on sleeping until Les comes to wake me up. Over on the girls' side, they're already up. They get up earlier because it takes them such a long time to comb out their curls and fuss around.

By 7 a.m. we're all ready for Holy Mass. Even the girls are ready on time. Of course, the Sisters have been up for a long time. They have all their prayers said – or anyway some of them – and the first Mass is all over. Some of the Sisters have to leave the chapel during the second Mass to get breakfast ready, or to take care of the little tots and things like that.



"The Lord be with you . . ." Thus each day begins, in the Chapel where we come for Holy Mass.

During Holy Mass we try to remember what a wonderful thing is happening here in our own chapel. All the big boys and girls have Missals, and we offer the Mass with the priest. Sometimes I miss seeing the elevation of the Sacred Host because I don't hear the bell, and I'm sorry about that because that's the most solemn moment of all. But I'm right there when it's time for Holy Communion. Most of us receive Jesus every day. We know He is our best friend and we need Him all the time.

After Holy Mass, we go to the dormitories and arrange our beds. Then the bell rings for



How about some more of those eggs, Sister? Three hearty meals and snacks between keep body and soul together.

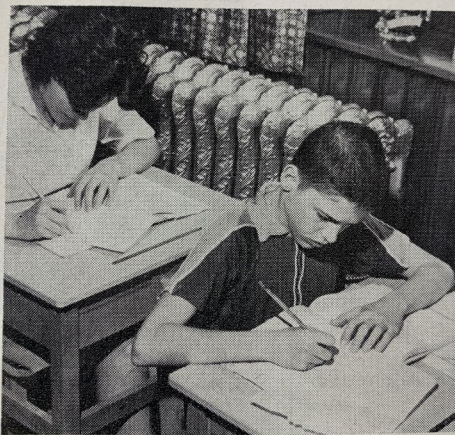
breakfast. Sister says there isn't a thing wrong with our appetites, even when it comes to eating cereal. After breakfast we all help with the dishes. The boys haul the dishes out to the kitchen and the girls help two of the Sisters to wash and dry them.



Do you use Duz in your dishpan? Well, no matter, many hands make light work — and fun!

Then the boys wash the tables and reset them for diner. Some of the boys and girls are sweeping and dusting hall and dormitories, while the younger kids are having a jolly time outside.

Then the hard work begins! What does Sister mean about pounding square roots into blockheads?



The next thing you know it's 8:40 a.m. and the bell sounds for school. Then the hard work begins! We have religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, and all the usual subjects, plus much work in speech, speechreading and language. We have to watch Sister all

the time or we miss what's going on. I don't want to miss a thing! Father Murphy teaches our religion classes each day, and Father McCarr helps out in the middle grades twice a week. They're both pretty wonderful. Then there are a priest and three Frates from Sacred Heart Monastery who help out once a week, and they're plenty good too.

I like school even if it is hard. The hardest thing of all is **language!** Whew! There are so many words to use, but my trouble is I don't know which **words** go where! For every correct way of saying a thing, there are a thousand wrong ways. And just by the law of averages, I usually strike one of the wrong ways! But Sister corrects and corrects and corrects, and she has high hopes for me.

► THIS IS OUR DAY - Continued on Page 10.

► **THIS IS OUR DAY - Continued from Page 9.**

After school the fun begins. In the wintertime, we can go tobogganing or ice skating or to the gym to practice basketball. We have three basketball teams, and we play other teams in the later afternoon or on weekends.

Hearing boys are sometimes surprised at how good we really are! But then, we lose our share of games, too. The girls have a volleyball team, and they're really pretty good. They make wonderful cheerleaders for our big basketball games too.

As for the little kids – they have lots of fun after school playing on the swings, merry-go-rounds, or teeter-totters, or else just “tearing around.”

By 5 o'clock we're back in school for study hour. The little kids are in school too – but they're just playing. A bell rings at 5:50

p.m. and then everybody starts moving again. The girls go to the kitchen to help carry food into the dining room, and the boys help tidy up the classrooms. By 6 o'clock we're more than ready for supper.

Everybody prays together, “Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts...”

Lots of interesting things happen after supper. On Sunday evenings we have a captioned movie. There's a group of people in

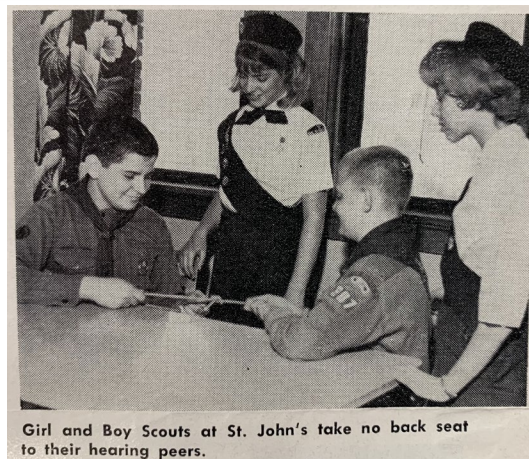


Washington, D.C. who pick out good movies and write captions for them. Then we get the movies, and it's great having the words right there where you can see them even if you can't hear

them. Now I understand movies much better than ever before.

Scout meetings are work, but they're fun, too. The best part of all is when we go camping. I wish we could go camping every weekend!

The girls have Scout meetings on Monday evenings too, and they get to go camping once every year. Our Scout leaders do a super job and we appreciate them even if we don't always remember to tell them so.



All work and no play is no good for anyone and deaf children are no exception.



By 5 o'clock we're back in school for study hour. The little kids are in school too – but they're just playing. A bell rings at 5:50



A little “TLC” (tender loving care) as we end another perfect day. May God keep us through the night.

On weekends, about one third of the kids go home and the rest of us do lots of different things like playing and working and watching TV or maybe going for a hike. We have time to read too, or work on hobbies. Some day we're going to have a big, new gym with loads of sports equipment; then three will be plenty of exciting things to do. So this is our day – pray, work, study and learn, eat, play, and gradually grow into what God wants us to be.

(Lower) And we're one happy family at indoor recreation too.



Quiz Answers: 1b; 2d; 3c; 4a; 5b

ST. JOSEPH, ADORER OF CHRIST

By Fr. Christopher Klusman

Even though the Year of St. Joseph is finished (sadly) on Dec. 8 of this Advent season, I hope you will enjoy this last article about St. Joseph and what he can teach us for this Advent and Christmas season. The one lesson, and probably the most important, is his devout adoration of Jesus as the Son of God.

Fr. Donald Calloway, M.I.C., in his wonderful book,

“Consecration to St. Joseph,” said that it is not easy to be faithful to Jesus in today’s world, not only because “the world does not want you to trust Jesus, hope in his promises or love him” (54), but also because we should NOT adore Jesus because it is “better” to be busy with many things, thus leaving no time for Jesus.

We all know it is very important to always remember to give time to Jesus every day. One of the best ways to give time to Jesus is to adore him. One of the best ways to do that is to attend Eucharistic Adoration, in which we can actually see and pray with and to Jesus himself!

I would like to share with you a beautiful example: Imagine St. Joseph’s wife, the Blessed Virgin Mary, pregnant with Jesus, such that St. Joseph can actually adore Jesus within her blessed womb? and the beautiful Nativity scene with the infant Jesus in the manger and St. Joseph adoring and looking upon the Word Made Flesh alongside the Blessed Virgin Mary. I often see images of Our Lady either holding or adoring the infant Christ, while St. Joseph is off to the side. What made the most sense is not St. Joseph sleeping, but him being truly in prayer ... thinking about, rejoicing and loving deeply the amazing event that happened: the Word who was born into our world!



When we think of St. Joseph and all the amazing things he did in his lifetime, what would have been his most important vocation? Fr. Calloway said it beautifully: “If St. Joseph

lived with Jesus for 30 years, his vocation was one of perpetual adoration.” (171) Also worthy to mention here is a masterpiece reflection by St. Peter Julian Eymard, who was often called the “Apostle of the Eucharist,” as he was a tireless promoter of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, even founding two religious orders (one for men and another for women) to promote Eucharistic Adoration:

Saint Joseph was the first adorer, the first religious. Although he never adored our Lord under the Eucharistic species and never had the happiness of communicating [receiving Holy Communion], he did possess and adore Jesus in human form.

... When we see how close Joseph came to Jesus, how thoroughly he was transformed into him, we grasp his true greatness, his real sanctity. We find in him [St. Joseph], the perfect adorer, entirely consecrated to Jesus, working always near Jesus, giving Jesus his virtues, his time, his very life; it is thus that he is our model and our inspiration.

... From [Jesus’] entry into the world, even while still enclosed in Mary’s womb as in a living ciborium, Jesus singled out Mary and Joseph to be his adorers. Joseph responded royally. He never ceased adoring Jesus in her womb. And after the child’s birth at Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary adored him uninterruptedly as he lay before their eyes. They represented all mankind at the feet of Christ.

... In profound adoration [St. Joseph] united himself to the special grace of each one of the events in the life of Jesus. Have confidence, strong confidence in him [St. Joseph]. Take him as the patron and the model of your life of adoration. (171-2)

Can you imagine that wherever St. Joseph traveled with his wife and Son, his home became an Adoration chapel?! Fr. Calloway said, “In that sense, St. Joseph is the founder of Adoration chapels and, with his wife, is the first to conduct a procession with the Body and Blood of Christ.” (173) Isn’t that beautiful? It does make us remember beautiful Eucharistic processions that we participated in years past, especially for Corpus Christi processions. It made beautiful sense that St. Joseph is the first to conduct a procession as he led Jesus and Our Lady to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Egypt, and even back to Nazareth! Get this: “After their time in Egypt, St. Joseph and Mary walked with Jesus to Nazareth. This long walk was, and remains, the grandest procession of the Body and Blood of Christ ever conducted. It was a procession that covered more

► ST. JOSEPH - Continued on Page 12.

► ST. JOSEPH - Continued from Page 11.

than 120 miles!” (177)

“Along with Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph gave the world the greatest Adoration chapel known to man, the Catholic Church. Thanks to Mary and St. Joseph, every Catholic church around the world has a tabernacle housing the Real Presence of Jesus Christ – Christ present in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.” (173) What is beautiful is how Fr. Calloway wrote about Our Blessed Mother, when pregnant, as a “walking tabernacle,” and the profound connection between Mother and Son, especially between Jesus and the Blessed Mother:



Have you heard of fetal microchimerism, sometimes also called fetomaternal microchimerism? It's a long, complicated term, I know, but it reveals something wonderful about biological connection between a mother and child. Fetal microchimerism is the scientific term that describes a process in which living cells of a child remain in the body of a mother after her pregnancy has ended. In the late 20th century, scientists discovered that when a woman becomes pregnant, and after she has given birth, there are cells from her baby in her body for the rest of her life! Scientists and researchers have also discovered that the cellular exchange occurs in the other direction as well; cells of the mother are exchanged with her children and remain in the bodies of her children for life. This is amazing!

Though St. Joseph knew nothing of fetal microchimerism, God continued to bless him with the presence of Jesus whenever he was in the presence of his wife. To be near Mary is to be near Jesus. Jesus lives in her! Mary has in her body some of her divine Son's living cells. Our Lord didn't need to be in the house for St. Joseph to remain in the presence of God. Wherever Mary was, Jesus was. Saint Joseph's wife is a living tabernacle, a walking monstrance, a veiled temple. No wonder demons do not dare come near Mary – she is never without the divine presence. God lives in her body! (177-8)

Wow... faith already knew what science had yet to uncover, until recently. This is why it is so important to trust the beautiful teachings of our faith from Jesus through the

apostles in our Catholic Church.

So during the Advent season, and with our Nativity scenes with empty manger, as well as to practice longing for Our Lord's coming, we can picture St. Joseph adoring Jesus within Our Lady's womb. We can practice adoring Our Lord, desiring, wanting and growing in excitement as we near the birthday of Jesus.

With St. Joseph teaching and reminding us to adore Our Lord, how can we continue to do so as we began the new year with Advent, the first season of our new liturgical year of 2021-22, and onwards? The one lesson that Fr. Calloway mentioned is important for us all: “Mary, God's tabernacle, is replicated in every tabernacle in a Catholic church. What is often missing in front of these tabernacles, however, are souls who resemble St. Joseph – souls who adore Jesus present and hidden in the tabernacle. The Church needs

more people like St. Joseph.” (179)

What are things that you can do to show adoration to Christ during Advent, Christmas and onwards? This is a great example that St. Joseph showed



us. While the Year of St. Joseph ended on Dec. 8, 2021, it doesn't mean (as I had mentioned before) we stop learning from him. As Christ was so thankful to have St. Joseph as his father on earth, we can make Christ thankful for the times we set aside on a daily basis to adore Our Precious Lord.

I will close here with a beautiful prayer from St. John Paul II:

O happy man, St. Joseph, whose privilege it was not only to see and hear that God whom many a king has longed to see, yet saw not, longed to hear, yet heard not (cf. Mt 13:17), but also to carry him in your arms and kiss him, to clothe him and watch over him!

O God, who has conferred upon us a royal priesthood, we pray to you to give us grace to minister at your holy altars with hearts as clean and lives as blameless as that blessed Joseph who was found to hold in his arms and, with all reverence, carry your only-begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary. Enable us this day to receive worthily the sacred Body and Blood of your Son, and equip us to win an everlasting reward in the world to come. Amen. (179)

St. Joseph, Adorer of Christ, pray for us!



PREPARING FOR MASSES FOR SOLEMNITY OF CHRISTMAS (DEC. 24/25)

St. Charles Borromeo Parish

3635 S. Marilyn St.
Milwaukee, WI 53221
Signed/Voiced Mass
w/Fr. Christopher & Deacon David
Dec. 25 at 4 pm

St. Andrew Parish

714 E. Walworth Avenue
Delavan, WI 53115
Interpreted Mass
Dec. 24 at 8:30 pm

St. Joseph Parish

1619 Washington Street
Grafton, WI 53024
Interpreted Mass
Dec. 24 at 10:30 pm

St. Mary's Immaculate Conception Parish

406 Jefferson St.
West Bend, WI 53090
Interpreted Mass
Dec. 24 at 4:30 pm

NOTE: Some other parishes still do not know their plans for their interpreted Christmas Eve/Day Masses. If you want to know, please email deafapostolate@archmil.org for any updates that may arise at some time before Christmas Eve.

Masses for Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Dec. 31/Jan 1)

This year, since the Solemnity of Mary falls on a Saturday, it is not a Holy Day of Obligation, but you are encouraged to attend. For information on interpreted/Signed Masses for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, please email deafapostolate@archmil.org.

INTERPRETED & ASL *Masses* THROUGHOUT THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE



- ASL WEEKEND MASS -

**St. Charles
Borromeo
Parish**

5571 S Marilyn
St., Milwaukee,
WI 53221

Time: Saturdays, 6 p.m.

Please email deafapostolate@archmil.org
for updates on Signed Masses, as we are
resuming normal schedules, etc.



- CLOSED CAPTIONED MASS -

St. Clare Parish
7616 Fritz St.,
Wind Lake, WI
53185

(None during the Summer 2021,
Will resume September 2021)

E-Mail: bulletins@tds.net

Website: stclarewindlake.org

**Times Listed Are Subject to Change* as of
May 25, 2021*



- INTERPRETED SUNDAY MASS -

St. Andrew Parish

714 E. Walworth Ave,
Delavan, WI 53115

Time: 9 a.m.

E-Mail: [deafministry@
sascatholics.org](mailto:deafministry@sascatholics.org)

Website: standrews-delavan.org



**St. Mary's
Immaculate
Conception**

1610 Monroe St,
West Bend, WI 53090

2nd Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Email: rprim@wbparishes.org

Website: stmaryparishwb.org



St. Peter Parish

2224 30th Ave,
Kenosha, WI
53144

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Please request at least 3 days in advance to:
broadwayterp73@gmail.com.

Website: stpeterskenosha.com



St. Joseph Parish

1619 Washington
St, Grafton,
WI 53024

1st & 4th Saturdays at 4 p.m.
and 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

E-Mail: parish@stjosephgrafton.org

Website: stjosephgrafton.org



**St. Paul the
Apostle Parish**

6400 Spring St,
Racine, WI 53406

Time: 10 a.m.

(on certain Sundays)

Please check with office prior to attending

E-Mail: svrana@stpaulracine.org

Website: stpaulracine.org



**Shepherd of the
Hills Parish**

W1562 County
Road B, Eden,
WI 53019

Please email deafapostolate@archmil.org
for schedule

Website: sothparish.org



ARCHDIOCESE
of MILWAUKEE



NO PEEKING

DO NOT

OPEN

TILL

DEC 25th



IN THIS ISSUE:

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FR. CK CORNER: CHRISTMAS

By Fr. Christopher Klusman



“The Savior is born!”
(Luke 2:11) Rejoice and be glad! We have now entered into a beautiful season. I hope you had a wonderful Advent, filled with times of increased

and deepened prayer, especially in adoration. And that you **did not peek** into this section until 4 p.m. Dec.

24, 2021. If you did, you will have to go to the Sacrament of Confession! Smile!

Merry Christmas to you all!

One of the beautiful things about Christmas is the Nativity

Scene. And now, hopefully if you had your Nativity Scene set up before Christmas (with the manger empty and perhaps filling it all through Advent season with straw as mentioned in the previous section's Giving Manger), you now can place baby Jesus in the manger. As we look to adore baby Jesus in the manger, it boggles the mind how many deeper meanings of baby Jesus in the manger there are. One deep meaning that I'd like to focus on here in this article is the manger as Jesus' throne.

While the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the

angels, shepherds, and even the Three Kings all bow, adore and worship the King of kings (Jesus) in the manger, Jesus doesn't use a fancy throne nor was He even born in a well-to-do shelter. He was born in the humblest of places: in a cave, placed into a manger. Because Jesus is the King of kings, the manger would be his throne.

One of the most beautiful lessons that I have learned is its application to our receiving

Holy Communion.

In this time and age with the tragedy of many people, even Catholics, not believing in the Real Presence/ the Eucharist as the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, the bread and wine during

Mass is consecrated into his Body and Blood. I'd like us to reflect carefully on a beautiful quote from a saint, St. Joseph Marelllo:

“When we receive Holy Communion, let us consider that Jesus comes to us as a little baby, and then let us pray that St. Joseph helps us welcome him, as when he held him in his arms.”

When you receive Jesus during Holy Communion, you can picture yourself as another manger when you receive baby Jesus



► FR. CK'S CORNER - Continued on Page 2.

MISSION STATEMENT - DEAF APOSTOLATE

The Deaf Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee exists to enable all Catholic Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to participate fully in the liturgical, educational, pastoral, spiritual and human concerns ministries in the Church.

► FR. CK'S CORNER - Continued from Page 1.

in the host, he lies inside of you in your heart and soul as in a manger. Isn't that a beautiful, powerful image? That the same Jesus about two thousand years ago who lay in a manger in Bethlehem is **the same** Jesus that lies in your heart and soul when you receive Holy Communion during Mass?!

With that discovery, what is your reaction? How would you receive Jesus in the Eucharist from now on during Mass? After receiving Jesus in the Eucharist and then going back to your pew, what do you do before the Closing Prayer begins?

Again, I say that Mass is like a Christmas every time we go because it is at the Mass that we are blessed to receive Jesus himself (as the greatest gift to us all) if in a state of grace.



Growing up in preparation for Christmas, we all learned the song, "Santa Claus is coming to town," in which one line said, "He's making a list, he's checking it twice, he's gonna find out whose naughty or nice. Santa Claus is coming to town."

So, I have to be a good boy to get Christmas presents. So, we have to do God's will and follow his teachings and commandments to still be in a state of grace to receive the greatest Christmas gift of Jesus. If I sinned, I must go to receive another beautiful gift before the gift of Jesus, which is the Sacrament of Confession, in order to be forgiven and thus restored to a state of grace.

Again, I hope you will enjoy this second half of the Newsletter with more things to keep you busy reading during the winter season. A Blessed Christmas and winter season to you!



The old man, one of the oldest citizens of the town, stepped onto the barber chair to celebrate his birthday with a haircut.



The barber was unaware of the occasion until the end of the clipping session, when the customer addressed him from the chair: "Today is my 95th birthday," the old fellow said. "Congratulations," said the barber smiling, "I hope I can give you a haircut on your 100th birthday." The aged patron speared the barber with a steady, steely gaze, "Maybe you can," he said, "you look pretty healthy."

TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE



Here is a picture of the students from St. John's School for the Deaf praying at the Nativity Scene. Oh, let us come and adore Jesus, Our Lord!



St. Andrew Parish

DEAF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINISTRY

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER: CHILD-LIKE EXCITEMENT FOR CHRISTMAS



**By Jennifer Paul,
Coordinator
Deaf Religious
Education
& Deaf Ministry
St. Andrew Parish,
Delavan**



Last year, Fr. Christopher Klusman tried something creative with the Advent/Christmas newsletter issue, and it was a hit! In the 2020 Advent / Christmas newsletter issue, there were two parts in the issue where there was a STOP sign on a page insert between Advent and Christmas parts.

It is a very visual way to emphasize the importance of Advent as a season by itself – and to focus on Christmas Day as a holy celebration by itself. Once again, this year’s issue has the same two parts, and once again, we are reminded of the importance of Advent by itself and to focus on Christmas Day by itself as well. As children of God, we need to be reminded every year because we are living in a very heavy saturation of commercialism and other secular pressures that can very easily drown out the season of Advent and the purpose of Christmas Day.

In our Deaf Religious Education classes, as we did for Halloween, which has its origin in the very beautiful spiritual

celebration, All Hallows’ Eve (which is the eve of All Saints’ Day on Nov. 1), we talked about the Advent season and Christmas Day. While our students got excited about their costumes and candies for Halloween, they were reminded of the spiritual purpose of All Hallows’ Eve. Likewise, the Advent season and Christmas Day are God’s spiritual gifts to remember our eternal relationship with Jesus. For example, while our students naturally enjoy the delicious treats from the Chocolate Advent calendar, it is but a corollary of a spiritual season preparing for Christmas Day.

Once we arrive at Christmas Day, our students get excited about the gifts they will be opening that morning. Again, it is but a corollary of what Christmas Day is all about – God’s gift of his Son for our eternal life.

This is not to say the children should not have the daily chocolate treats from the Advent Calendar nor that we should not exchange presents on Christmas morning. No one would want to stop

receiving gifts – and I do know I would not want to stop giving gifts. Nothing brings me greater joy than seeing a face brighten up with their gifts!

“Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” (Luke 18:17)

All of this – the children enjoying the daily chocolate treats and us taking delight in our presents on Christmas Day are wonderful visuals of how we should be child-like during Advent and Christmas. We must be excited about the coming of Jesus Christ like children or else we “will not enter it” (the kingdom of God).

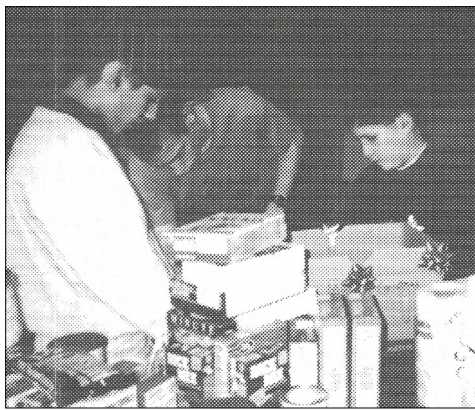
It is with great hope that we all, as children of God, take this issue – with its creative and visual two-part approach – with a deep appreciation and greater understanding of what we need to do during Advent and on Christmas Day. We need to work hard at pushing

► FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER -
Continued on Page 5.

CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE

Begun in the previous Fall 2019 Newsletter, an article/feature is chosen from an older Newsletter to revisit important people, events and places in our rich history. I hope you enjoy this selection from the March/April 1994 "Hand in Hand" Newsletter as it showed a group called the Deaf Youth Outreach Program doing a Christmas food drive.

In celebrating the holiday spirit, the Deaf Youth Outreach Program held a Christmas food drive in December. Bag after bag of non-perishables were dropped off at the Cousins Center one cold Saturday morning, amazing both children and coaches with the wonderful gifts of food. We all rolled up our sleeves and took to the task of separating food and putting it into boxes so people could enjoy several meals. The real fun began when we started to decorate the boxes and make holiday cards for the people who would receive the abundance of food. Ribbons flew through the air, scotch tape was used



by the yards, and all the creative talents glistened on the finished product – 11 boxes and 5 bags of food.

Fr. Bill Key took a few boxes for families at St. Lawrence, Deacon Michael Erwin took a few bags and boxes for families of St. Rose, and the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was also given food for those people in need.

After all our hard work, workers shared holiday cookies and hot chocolate as we talked about our family holiday traditions. Grandmas and Grandpas, do you realize how important you are at this time of year? Every tradition included looking forward to going to Grandma's and Grandpa's house or having them come to ours. One family invites people who do not have a family to come to their home on Christmas eve and stay with them through Christmas day.... presents and all. Each child spoke of a tradition special to them. The story-telling offered a wonderful conclusion to our day together and prompted us to recall those traditions most dear to each of us. What are your family traditions?

In St. John's School for the Deaf's publications of the "Our Young People," there is a section that has their current news. I hope you will enjoy these various news clippings:

**News
of
St.
John's**



✿

They start in young these days — the little four and five-year-olds in Sister Henriella's room make real Christmas cookies. They help stir the batter, and cut out the cookies. Then they all watch carefully over the little electric stove in their room while it bakes the cookies — just so. After that, there's a party, and not one of the little tykes needs instructions on what to do with the cookies then.

January 1953

Now that all letters to Santa Claus are duly written and mailed, the children are counting the days until the big Christmas party to be given by the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

December 1954

REFLECTION QUESTION:



Try to start a conversation with your family and/or friends about this question.

If you could create a stained glass window for your church, what design or images would it contain?

WHY DO WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ATTEND MASS?

This is borrowed from “The Catholic Company’s Get Fed: Bite-Sized Faith.” Enjoy!

“Does it really matter if you miss Mass just once?” a non-Catholic might ask.

Yes, it does matter.

Through His Church, God commands us to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. It is a **mortal sin** to miss Mass without a grave reason (such as illness, being housebound, a first responder rushing to a call, etc).

You may wonder why the Church *commands* weekly Mass attendance under pain of sin, rather than simply *suggesting* it. It’s important to know why—not only to strengthen our own faith, but also in case any curious non-Catholics ask about it.

The reason for the Sunday obligation is that **we owe God worship as His creatures**. It’s not just a nice spiritual ritual or an outward show of being Catholic. God is our Creator. He made us out of *nothing* and keeps us in existence through His own power and will. We owe everything to Him, and our regular worship of Him is how we express our innate desire—and our natural obligation—to offer our Creator homage and gratitude.

Furthermore, without His grace and presence in our lives, our souls and therefore our salvation are in danger. He doesn’t *need* our worship—but we *do* need Him.



If we ignore God’s command to worship on Sundays, we are putting other things before God, as though He were of secondary importance. And we are destroying our relationship with Him and walking away from the spiritual graces our soul needs to stay alive. As one priest said, skipping Sunday Mass

is somewhat analogous to a deep-sea diver’s putting a crimp in his air line so that no air can come through to keep him alive. By a decision to miss Sunday Mass or a holy day of obligation we suspend the operation of sanctifying grace in our lives.

—Fr. Ray Ryland, “Why Is It a Mortal Sin to Miss Mass?” at *Catholic Answers*

God knows that, due to our fallen nature, we struggle to do what we should, feel confused about it, and are even tempted not to. That’s why He gives us clear commandments.

The Third Commandment prescribes weekly worship of God: “**Thou shalt keep holy the Lord’s day.**” And Jesus commanded: “**Do this in memory of me**” (Luke 22:19).

If Mass on Sunday were just an option—and skipping it were not a sin—can any of us honestly say we would never, ever miss a Sunday Mass?

We—and the Church—know the answer.

Taken from: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/getfed/why-do-we-have-an-obligation-to-attend-mass/>

CATHOLIC QUIZ (CHRISTMAS)

1. What are the liturgical colors of Christmas?

- a) Gold/White b) Green/Red
c) Red d) Green

2. True or False: It was snowing when Jesus was born on the first Christmas.

- a) True b) False

3. Which saint made the Nativity Scene popular?

- a) St. Augustine of Hippo b) St. Pio of Pietrelcina
c) St. Francis of Assisi d) St. Nicholas

4. Which of the following Feast Days is not celebrated during the Christmas Season?

- a) Circumcision of the Lord b) Feast of the Holy Family
c) St. Nicholas d) Epiphany

5. How many days old was Jesus when he was circumcised and given his name?

- a) 1 day b) 8 days c) 12 days d) 40 days



(Answers on page 10.)

► FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER - Continued from Page 3.

through the heavy saturation of secular pressures and “zero in” on the true purpose of the Advent season and Christmas Day. We need to be proactive and find ways to protect the time to prepare and meditate – by prayer – as we await and finally celebrate the ultimate gift, which is the coming of Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation.

Get joyful and sing like an excited child:

*I know you came to rescue me
This baby boy would grow to be
A man and one day die for me and you
My sins would drive the nails in you
That rugged cross was my cross, too
Still every breath you drew was Hallelujah
Hallelujah!*

AT THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Here is a beautiful story borrowed from "Our Young People: The Friend of the Deaf," December 1959 issue.

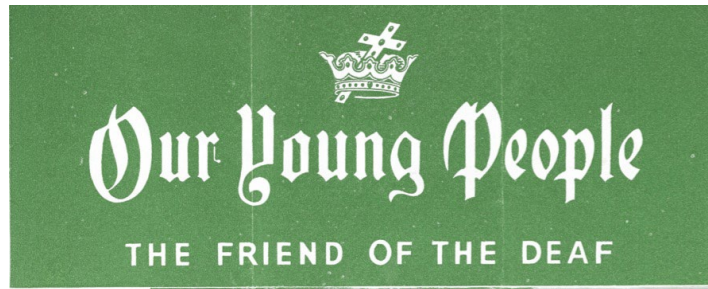
He walked sedately on tiptoe in squeaky brand new shoes. He was small enough still to have some of the wonder of the Christmas angel in his eyes; old enough to carry a look of the three wise men about him. A stranger looking upon him knew him to be just what he really was – a little boy who suddenly discovered the real meaning of Christmas.

Kneeling with reverent folded hands he studied the scene before him. It was beautiful beyond his dreams. The stable of Bethlehem, the shepherds, the Blessed Mother and dear St. Joseph. He looked in awe-struck wonder at the patient beasts. He put his hand stealthy into the manger to feel of the straw. He sniffed the pines surrounding the cave. In such a dreary stable, on just such a cold night in the long ago, the little Christ-child, God, was born.

Well, he knew that story. As far back as his seven-year memory would carry him he had heard about that blessed night. Every Christmas with his mother and father he had come to visit the Crib. In school, Sister had taught him all about the star that led the three Kings; of the shepherds keeping watch on the hill; about the angels singing their blessed songs of welcome.

And now with his very own eyes he witnessed it and drank in the beauty of the scene. With the rest of men, he came to visit the newborn babe. This Christmas that little Christ had been his in a special way. He had come onto his heart in Holy Communion. He was a big boy now – seven years old. And his visit to the Crib was a very special visit indeed.

A little boy's heart, like a little boy's pockets, contains a strangely jumbled assortment of many things. The little boy at the Crib of Christ wears his heart for all the world to see. Lessons we might all well read are written in every move of that sturdy body. With his newly awakened sense of holy things, he stands, pondering the great drama. His eyes, lips, folded hands tells a Christmas story. It is the tribute of Childhood to the Infant Savior.



We can imagine the symphony of that small boy heart for the baby stranger. Next to the wonder of it all, the boyish interest in the unique surrounding, the cruel cold winds, the poverty of that manger bed, comes his own little boy feeling for the little boy Christ.

"No home," he says to himself over and over again. Back in his father's house there is a Christmas tree taller than any in that stable. When he returns from Mass, it will be all lighted and trimmed with gifts. It is every year. Gifts for himself. Presents from mother, father, his sisters and his brothers. Oh, home is a lovely place on Christmas! "No home." The

little boy at the Crib feels a tightness in his throat and a sting in his eyes. If he were not in church surrounded by so many people, he surely might cry. "No home!" It is very sad.

There besides the Christmas Crib a child heart is trying to comfort the Infant God. "Dear Little Savior," he says, "I will be very good to You. I have a little brother just about as big as You. I mind him and play with him and buy him toys. I know all about babies. If You will come into my heart and come home with me, I will be very good to You, God."

Oh, little boy at the Christmas Crib, give me your faith and love and sweet and simplicity! Help me look upon that blessed sight with your wonder-struck innocent eyes!

From out the crowd a young girl takes her place beside the Crib. Womanhood is dawning in her serious eyes. She is wearing her first grown-up dress and walks up the aisle with a queenly grace and bearing. Other years she came as one of the school children to visit that crib. This year she comes alone. School gates have closed behind her, she is holding her first job. It is as a young woman of the world she comes to visit her Savior.

Reverently silent she kneels, earnest, intense. What is it she

► **AT THE CHRISTMAS CRIB - Continued on Page 7.**

► **AT THE CHRISTMAS CRIB - Continued from Page 6.**

sees there in that crib she never saw before? Why is it all so different? A woman's pity is in her heart, and a woman's tears ready to flow. Her warm coat reproaches her for the poverty in cold of that barren stable. In her little girl days she yearned to cover Him over with her tiny coat to help to keep Him warm. In her grown-up days she sees in Him all the neglected souls in all the world. She hears in her ears the cries of the little ones in distant lands who know Him not and perhaps will never know Him. Her tender child-heart once broke over the cold winds that blew about Him and made Him shiver in the night. Her Woman's heart is torn with the lack of sympathy and bitter hostility of the outside world to a God who came to save it. What is it she is asking of the Infant Christ as she kneels there by His Crib this blessed night? She is asking what youth the World over is asking this day. With all her untried Faith and Hope and Love she is marking mighty promises. She is pledging great things. She is giving to the Infant in the manger that which He so greatly craves – the tribute of youth. "I will serve You. Lord; I will help to carry Your burdens; I will make Your name known in distant places; Bare Your gospel to the far corners of the earth; I will live for You alone, little Christmas Christ, if You will but come into my poor unworthy heart."

Oh youth on this holy morn give us of your divine generosity!
Help us to dream holy dreams!

Beside the Crib kneels a mother. She is one of the vast number that come from mansion and cottage, mothers of the rich and mothers of the poor. She comes bearing greetings no other being on earth could quite supply.

Kneeling there beside Him the eyes of the mother see things the rest of men could never see. She detects the heart-breaking pathos of that blessed picture. It is the blessed Mother she visits rather than her little son and as woman to woman she yearns over her as one of her own. "Just a little girl," she says to herself. "Scarcely as old as Mary. All alone upon such a night!"

Beside that crib her mother-heart is broken with pity and love and sympathy. How she would love to have made that bed for that baby Christ. What pleasure sublime is would have brought her mother-heart to have made but one woolly blanket to cover Him over. With that intense joy she would have swept clean that stable and built a fire against the coldness of the night.

Looking upon her perhaps we see but a careworn shabby middle-aged woman. To our eyes her tired form holds little of the romance of life. She is but one of the hundreds who come in out of the night to kneel at his side. We imagine her

one who has tried all her days to make ends meet and succeed none to well. The man of her heart has been dead these years past and she struggles on alone. Her children have grown up and scattered to the four corners of the globe. Her life story is almost finished and she is not sorry to see it close. The world is not a very wonderful place to the poor and the old. But she does not complain. And Christmas night beside the Crib of Christ she is motherhood personified. She represents the humility self-sacrifice, sublime faith of the mothers of the world. Giving all and asking nothing.

Bending low before his Crib she has but one supreme desire. To hush in her two strong arms that little Babe and to comfort his poor young mother. With Mary the Mother of God she sees in His Baby eyes the shadow of the cross. She cannot listen to the Angels' hymns without hearing above the beautiful Christmas music the cries of the soldiers surrounding His Cross. And bowing her poor tired head at His manger she weeps bitter tears for that Blessed Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. They are tears for you and for me and for the world. A mother's tribute to the Infant Christ.



ST. CLARE: MODEL SAINT FOR THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

By Fr. Christopher Klusman

St. Clare is one of the most beloved saints of all time, as she is connected to St. Francis of Assisi. St. Clare has so much to teach us that would be impossible to explain in this article. I'd like to begin with a summary of her life and what she can teach us about her experience during a Christmas in her extraordinary life.

Regarding to her life, here is an excerpt written by Fr. John O'Connor, borrowed from <https://stclare-queens.org/st-clare-of-assisi>. It is shown here in italics:

Saint Clare is believed to have been born on July 16, 1194 in Assisi. While there is uncertainty to the exact date of her birth, there is no question to the fact that she was the oldest of three girls of the wealthy Offreduccio Family. There was nothing extraordinary of her early years. Clare along with her sisters enjoyed the life of a rich family of the times.



Clare spent her youthful days learning music, fine embroidery and how to entertain guests at social gatherings. A woman of Clare's status had no need of cooking skills since she would always have servants in the kitchen.

Clare's mother, Ortolana, was very religious and taught all her children about Jesus and the importance of Sunday Mass and prayer. Clare's father, Faverone, was happy about the beautiful and gentle woman she was becoming. By her seventeenth year he had found her a wealthy man to be her husband.

Clare seemed to be the luckiest girl in the world. She had it all – but she did not feel as happy and peaceful as she thought she should. There were many poor people in Assisi and the surrounding towns and this at times disturbed her.

While growing up, Clare was very popular at the parties held for the wealthy young people of Assisi. No doubt she first met St. Francis at such events before he left all worldly goods behind.

When she was about 17 Clare again met Francis. This time he and his brothers were enthusiastically preaching about Jesus and caring for the poor. This message and the tremendous joy that Francis and his followers demonstrated challenged Clare to think about her own life. She found Francis and his brothers to be filled with more peace than her father and uncles who were some of the most successful men in Assisi. But they were always worried

about someone or something.

Clare went to the Lenten Sermons Francis preached in 1211 and then met privately with him. They spoke of the beauty of poverty, caring for the poor and sick and living like Jesus. She then knew what she wanted to do with her life.

On Palm Sunday of 1212, Clare decided to elope – not with the man to whom her family promised her – but to Jesus. Wearing her best dress and jewelry, she went to the Portiuncula where Francis and his followers held lighted candles and sang the psalms. There, Clare Offreduccio promised her life to Jesus. She removed her wealthy clothes and jewels and embracing poverty put on a rough gray robe and wooden sandals. Then St. Francis himself cut off Clare's long and beautiful hair as she renounced the world.

Because she was the first woman to follow Francis and there was no place for her to stay, Francis directed her to live with a group of Benedictine Sisters where she would learn about convent life and living in community.

Clare's father was furious that his oldest daughter joined Francis and his followers. He tried to remove her by force from the monastery where Clare was. She ran into the chapel and literally held on to the Altar as her relatives tried to take her home. Because she was so steadfast and resolute, her family let her stay.

Others began to join Francis and Clare in their work and prayer including Clare's own sister Agnes. They soon founded a convent for the sisters at the church of San Damiano. After her father died, Clare's own mother would join the community as well as other wealthy women from the town and from as far away as the great city of Florence.

Francis appointed Clare as the women's superior in 1215. They would soon be known as Poor Clares. Wearing no shoes, fasting often, perpetually abstaining from meat and sleeping on the hard wood floors the sisters radically embraced a life of poverty and penance. Their embrace of poverty was only equaled by their embrace of prayer. Taking a vow of silence they rarely spoke except to sing God's praises in the psalms and in prayer.

Francis, Clare and their followers vowed not to have any possessions. It was an extremely tough vow and no other group of religious at that time made such a promise. It was a way of life that made some in the Church uneasy. When St. Francis died in 1226, Clare was to insure that this embrace of "Sister Poverty" was to be incorporated into the Sisters' Rule.

As tough and extreme as their lives were, it did not stop the

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► **ST. CLARE** - Continued from Page 8.

community from growing in numbers. Many from all over Europe came to Assisi and were moved by the prayer and joyful spirit of Clare and her sisters. Some in turn returned home and founded convents of Poor Clares in their own towns and cities.

One story of the power of St. Clare's prayer regards the invasion of the Saracens in 1240. As the invading forces surrounded and attacked Assisi, they made their way to the city they first encountered San Damiano – the convent where Clare and her sisters lived – because it was outside the city walls. As the warriors approached, Clare's sisters panicked and roused Clare from her sick bed. She in turn led them in prayer and as the invaders began to show themselves over the convent walls, she took the monstrance from the chapel with the consecrated Host and showed it to the Saracens. Upon seeing Clare holding the Blessed Sacrament the enemy first froze in their tracks and then gripped with a feeling of terror began to retreat. While they never returned to the convent again, Clare's sisters knew that illness had Clare firmly in its grasp...

Now, I will go off a little bit here. There is an amazing experience of St. Clare on Christmas in the year 1252, which would be her last Christmas on earth. St. Clare was so ill that she was not well enough to rise from her bed to attend group prayer and Midnight Mass at the Church of St. Francis with her sisters and friars. The Church was more than a mile away.

St. Clare began to cry ... She then realized that her lonely cell was better lodging than the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph had, so she began to meditate on the Christmas Mystery (event). Suddenly, her cell burst into light and her room was filled with the sound of a great organ player. St. Clare was able to see the Church of St. Francis ablaze with candles and she watched the celebrant go to the altar. She was able to participate at the Mass and listen to the beautiful chants. She also was able to receive the Precious Holy Communion, too.

The vision St. Clare received was so clear that she could name the friars who were present at the Christmas Mass. It was because of this that she was named patroness of television.

According to this fascinating excerpt from a text, "Francis of Assisi the Prophet Early Documents," Vol. III, p. 626: "When the office in San Damiano was finished and the nuns returned to Saint Clare, they said to her: 'O Sister Clare, our Mother, what great consolation we've had on this Holy Nativity! If only it pleased God that you could have been with us!' And Saint Clare replied: 'My sisters and dearest daughters, I give thanks and praise to Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, because I have been present at all the solemnities of this holy night, and at greater ones than you have

been, with much consolation to my soul, for by the intercession of my father Saint Francis and by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, with the ears of my body and spirit I heard the whole Office and the music of the organ there and in that very place I received Holy Communion. Therefore, rejoice and thank God for such grace shown to me."

St. Clare gave Jesus a Christmas gift through her great desire to attend the Christmas Midnight Mass and her grief in missing it due to her illness. At the same time, Jesus Christ gave her a Christmas gift of allowing her to participate in the Christmas Mass in an amazing way!

...Clare and her sisters became popular without leaving their lives of prayer, work and silence. Word of their radical life spread through the land. Many women wanted to join in their ranks. Clare was so renown for her holiness that the pope and countless others came to her deathbed. In the midst of her sisters and three friars she died on August 11, 1253.

Because of her renowned sanctity of life, the Church opened her process to becoming a canonized saint just over two months after her death on October 18, 1253. During that process, much more about the "Humble Lady of Assisi" was discovered by exploring her writings and listening to the many accounts of those who knew her. Pope Alexander IV finally proclaimed her a saint on August 15, 1255. On February 17, 1958, Pope Pius XII declared her the Patroness of those involved in Television and the Media.

Today there are hundreds of Poor Clare convents all over the world.

May her desire not to miss the Christmas Mass increase in you a desire to not miss any (required) Masses, especially for Christmas.



'COME TO ME' INVITES A RETURN TO MASS

By Larry Hanson

Here is an important article from the "Catholic Herald," published November 16:

To help encourage those who have been away from Sunday Mass, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee has launched a simple effort called "Come to Me," with the hopes of drawing people to Mass.

"The last two years of the pandemic have obviously been incredibly challenging," said Pete Burds, the director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the archdiocese. "The wholehearted prayer of people right now is 'Lord, give us rest!'"

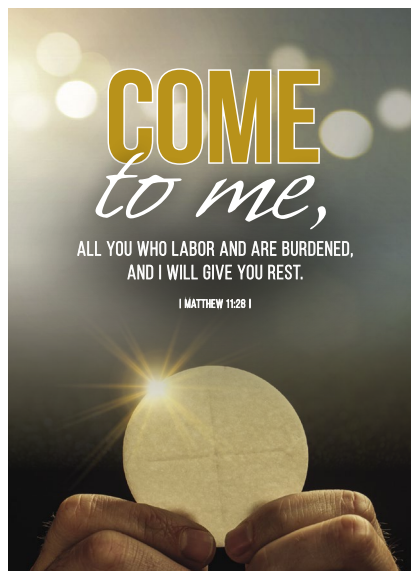
In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

"This invitation from Jesus to 'Come to me,' is an incredible, potentially life-changing invitation," Burds said. "Our hope is to help people come back to Mass, but it's ultimately to have to friendship with Jesus Christ lived deeply within the Church. For those whose faith may have been hanging on by a thread, this may be an opportunity to return and grow as Christ's disciple."

"Come to Me" is an initiative in the spirit of Archbishop Jerome E. Listeck's pastoral letter, "The Gift of Sunday," which was released in January. But even further back than "The Gift of Sunday," this effort has its roots in the 2014 Archdiocesan Synod, which identified Evangelization and Sunday Mass as one of the top priorities. COVID-19 certainly had a major impact on Mass attendance when the dispensation was lifted in September 2020.

"We're seeing that Mass attendance in our parishes hasn't gone back to 100 percent of what it was before the pandemic," Burds said. "In light of that, and declining Mass attendance even prior, we've been deeply wrestling with how do we effectively invite people back to Mass?"

As part of the "Come to Me" effort, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee will provide parishes with communication assets, evangelization



training and catechetical resources to both call and welcome people to Mass. Burds describes this as a two-pronged evangelization effort: through communication efforts (social media, website, videos, etc.) and training in how to evangelize, personally inviting people to Mass.

"The two things you don't talk about at a cocktail party are religion and politics," Burds said. "People tend to avoid taking about faith. However, part of the very fabric of what it means to be Catholic is to evangelize. Talking about Christ to others is what he has called us to do. This needs to be at forefront of what we're doing. In the Catholic view of evangelization, it's simply proclaiming Christ, either by our words or by the witness of life. To

live an attractive life of invitational joy that others are drawn to."

"Evangelization is a lot simpler than people think it is," Burds continued. "You don't need to know everything about the Catholic faith to be able to do share the love of Christ with others."

An aspect of "Come to Me" is to train a Mass-going Catholic who is alive in their faith and help equip them to welcome and invite people they are already in relationship with to come closer to Christ. To say, "Who are some people in your life that have some sense of trust with you that you can invite to Mass?"

"That has to do with people who are already attending Mass regularly, going out and inviting friends and family and co-workers, whether it's the first time or (they are coming) back to Mass since the pandemic," Burds said.

Now is the perfect time to invite people to reconnect to their local Catholic community, rediscover Jesus' Presence in the Eucharist, and renew their "normal" with Jesus at the center of their life.

"That's a strange pair of stockings you have on, Pat – one red and the other green."

"Yes, and I've got another pair like it at home."



Quiz Answers: 1a; 2b False; 3c; 4c; 5b

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns. I am thankful that thorns have roses. –Allophones Karr



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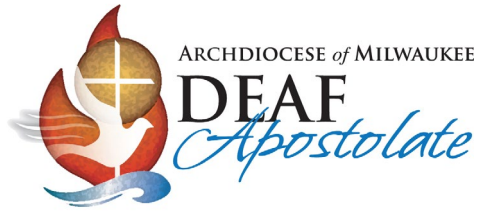
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