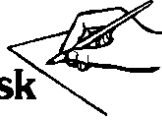


**From the
Pastor's Desk**

Dear Parishioners,
Remember that this coming week we celebrate the patronal feast of the United States: the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, which is on December 8. This is a holy day of obligation, so, whether we come to St. Joseph or go to another parish, we have a serious obligation to attend Mass on the evening before or on the day of this feast of our Blessed Mother. Masses at St. Joseph will be at 6:00 P.M. on the evening of December 7 and at 8:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. on December 8. Our youth enrolled in our religious education program will be attending the 7:00 P.M. Mass on December 8, which I expect our parents to see to it that their children are present for this Mass. Further, following the 7:00 P.M. Mass, there will be Eucharistic Adoration from the end of Mass until Midnight in Church, for which there are sign-up sheets on the tables in the entry of the church for those who are able to sign up for an hour or half an hour of prayer. Our American bishops are encouraging this time of prayer for our nation that all hearts might be converted to respecting all human life from the moment of conception to natural death. Speaking of respect for life, this past week we received, from an anonymous donor, copies of the National Catholic Bioethics Center's publication entitled "A Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decisions" for the purpose of these being distributed to the members of our parish households. This pamphlet outlines the Church's teaching on advance directives, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide. There is also included a two-sided sheet that provides proper wording for a Catholic to designate a health care proxy and an advance medical directive, which is something you can take to an attorney for such. Since no one can know which circumstances are going to be faced, if one would ever be incapacitated to make his or her own decisions regarding health care procedures, the best preparation is to choose someone, along with alternates, to whom medical power of attorney is granted because a mere advanced

medical directive could never anticipate every possible medical situation. If anyone ever has questions regarding what they should do in these matters, I am happy to provide counsel and direction on what is consistent with our Catholic Church teaching. Please pray for the generous donor as we are thankful for providing our parishioners with such an aide.

As Christmas approaches, I will be offering an extended schedule for the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation so that there is ample opportunity for you to go to confession in preparation for the celebration of Our Lord's birth. Of course, you may go to another parish, if you so choose for confession. Whether you come here to St. Joseph or go to another parish, it warms a pastor's heart to know that his parishioners have received this sacrament of Our Lord's mercy. Jesus was born to take away our sins, but he cannot take them away unless we ask him to do so. In next week's bulletin, I will provide an examination of conscience to aid you in making your confession.

You have probably noticed that we have two outdoor nativity sets this year. There is the one by the church doors that the parish already possessed. The one that is out by the church sign near Main Street is one that the parish received from the estate of Msgr. Robert Gass, for which we are grateful. Please remember the repose of the soul of Msgr. Gass in your prayers. We thank the members of the Knights of Columbus for setting these nativity displays up last weekend.

On Thursday, December 16, I invite you to a Christmas open-house at the rectory from 6:30 to 9:00 P.M. Zeke is really excited about this as he loves parties (Don't worry. I will have him kenneled up)! So, I hope to see you that evening for some refreshments, appetizers, and socializing.

I pray that your Advent is going well and that all of you are finding the time for some extra prayer during this holy season.

God bless,
Father Gutowski



MASS INTENTIONS

DECEMBER 6 THRU DECEMBER 12

Monday	Conrad Kwapnioski
Tuesday	Ray Heimes
Wednesday 8 a.m.	Theresa Brazda
7 p.m.	Griencewic Family
Thursday	Richard J. Hazuka, Sr
Friday	Martha & Gilbert Krolikowski
Saturday	Edward Hayes
Sunday	People of St. Joseph

CLIP AND SAVE

Below is the holiday schedule for Reconciliation and Masses for Christmas:

RECONCILIATION:

Saturday, December 18, 3:00 - 4:45 p.m.

Sunday, December 19, 7:45 - 8:45 a.m.

Monday, December 20, 7:00 p.m.

Reconciliation Service w/individual confessions following (3 priests will be available)

Tuesday, December 21, After morning mass and 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 22, After morning mass and 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 23, After morning mass and Noon - 1:00 p.m.

HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE:

Christmas Eve, 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Midnight Mass

Christmas Morning, 9:00 a.m.

NO 5:00 P.M. MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

NO regular confession time from 4:00 - 4:45 on Christmas Day

Sunday, December 26, 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, December 31, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 1, 9:00 a.m.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY MASS

There will be mass said at the Holy Family Shrine on Sunday, December 26 at 1:00 p.m. Archbishop Lucas will be the celebrant. Everyone is invited to attend.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

There has been a slight change in the Christmas weekend mass schedule. The Christmas masses will remain the same at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, at Midnight and at 9 a.m. Christmas Day. However, there will be NO mass on Christmas evening at 5 p.m. in anticipation of Sunday. There will be just one mass for the regular weekend and it will be at 9 a.m. on Sunday morning. A Saturday evening mass in anticipation of Sunday is not allowed since Saturday is Christmas Day.

New Year's Day masses will be as scheduled. They are at 5 p.m. on New Year's eve and at 9 a.m. on New Year's day. The feast of Mary, Mother of God, usually a Holy Day of Obligation will not be a mandated Holy Day this year because it falls on a weekend.

BLOOD DRIVE

Your St. Joseph Knights of Columbus are once again sponsoring a Community Blood Drive Sunday Dec. 12th 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. at the Springfield City Hall. Please consider giving to this worthwhile event, lets show our Springfield giving spirit. Signup on-line at www.redcrossblood.org Sponsor code 111 or Call Ralph at 253-8301 Thank You.

REMINDER - FIRST SATURDAYS

On the First Saturday of each month Mass is being offered at 9:00 a.m. followed by 1st Saturday devotions and Eucharistic Adoration.

and hearts that welcome Jesus.

FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS

This week brings us the opportunity to celebrate a saint's day while simultaneously encouraging some popular religious traditions. Monday is the Feast of St. Nicholas. In several cultures, this is day to anticipate the gift giving of Christmas a bit. The tradition is to put one's shoes outside the bedroom door tonight to see what gift St. Nicholas leaves in them by morning. Encouraging parents to adopt this tradition at home brings the liturgy into family life and offers a great opportunity to teach children about the real Santa Claus and his generosity as a bishop in Turkey long ago.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND PERPETUAL ADORATION

Wednesday, December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, is a Holy Day of Obligation. Masses that day will be at 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., this allowing the Religious Education children to attend.

December 8 has also been set aside appropriately as the National Night of Prayer for Pro Life. We will have Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 8 p.m. until midnight in the chapel. There is a sign-up sheet on the table at the rear of the church to designate a time you can fill during this period. It is set in half hour increments. Please make every effort to have someone present praying during this entire period.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Advent is the season the church gives us to prepare ourselves for Jesus to be born in us. How do we prepare our hearts? Today we will hear John the Baptist call us to repent and to bear good fruit as a sign of that repentance. Let us pray today that our home preparations for Christmas bear only "good fruit" - creating not the perfect house, but open, hospitable homes

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When little Logan received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Logan, wait until we say our prayer," his mother reminded him.

"I don't have to", the little boy replied.

"Of course you do," his mother insisted, "We say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's our house," Logan explained, "but this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook."

PRAYER FOR HEALING

Loving and compassionate God,
when your Son walked this earth
he extended his healing hand toward the sick
and cured those afflicted with every disease.
We turn to you now in our need
and ask you to care for those who are ill.
Protect those who face surgery,
and watch over those held bound by infirmity.
Through the power of your healing love,
free from every disease and suffering
those who are beset by poor health.
Guide with your wisdom all who provide care,
and assist doctors, nurses, and medical workers
so that they may effectively relieve suffering and
bring health to all whom they treat.
Amen