



**ST. MARY'S PARISH
8 CHURCH ST.
HOLLISTON, MA 01746**

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01746
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NEWSLETTER JANUARY, 2021

Please remember that to make sure there is a seat for everyone who comes to worship ...

All Christmas Masses are by RESERVATION ONLY (No Walk-Ins).

The Pandemic regulations have dropped our church seating from 600 to about 140. The Archdiocese has advised us to have only reserved seating for 2020 Christmas Masses.

This is the only way to avoid "*no room at the inn.*" We do not want anyone to try to come in and be turned away for lack of space. By requiring an Advance Mass Sign-Up Reservation, we avoid that happening.

A Sign-Up link for Christmas will be emailed to all Parishioners on Monday, December 14. It will also be available on that date at:

<https://stmarysholliston.com/>

You may also register by phone at 508-429-4427, through Noon on Wednesday, December 23.

Online Sign-Ups will end at Midnight, Wednesday, December 23. No reservations can be accepted after that time.

Please reserve all together as a group those who will be sitting together. Please try to come as a family all to the same Mass, as this makes more seats available for all.

Church: Please enter through the front doors. The two transepts will be filled first, then the Nave from the front back to the doors. Kindly follow the directions of the ushers.

Hall: Please enter through the black door to the left of the double glass Parish Center parking lot doors.



Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve

3:00 PM Masses in both the Church and Fr. Haley Hall

5:00 PM Masses in both the Church and Fr. Haley Hall

7:30 PM Mass in the Church

11:00 PM Midnight Mass in the Church

** All worship areas will be fully cleaned, aired out, and sanitized between Masses. So dress warmly because we will have opened the windows to change out the air.*

Friday, December 25, Christmas Day

9:30 AM Mass in the Church

11:30 AM Mass in the Church

(11:30 AM Livestreamed on Facebook and HCAT)

St. Mary's Parish Newsletter

January, 2021 ~ Volume 46, Number 3



St. Mary's Parish
8 Church Street
Holliston, MA 01746

Rectory: 429-4427, 879-2322
Religious Education Center: 429-6076
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Religious Education Email: st.marysre1870@gmail.com
Parish Email Address: st.marys1870@gmail.com
Website: www.stmarysholliston.com

GIFTS OF FAITH AND LOVE

Neither the pandemic nor a weekend snowstorm could stop the generosity of the good people of St. Mary's. On December 5 & 6, no less than 622 Christmas gift donations were brought to our church – a 17% increase over last year. Three St. Mary's Knights of Columbus, several of their family members, and four High School students sorted and packed the gifts. (All wearing masks). The gifts were then driven into Boston to be distributed to the children of two low income, inner city Catholic Parishes. In these hard economic times, we know these gifts will be a light in the darkness for those who receive them. Well done and thank you to all who were part of this annual effort!



WELCOME ~

We're glad you are here! With joy, St. Mary's receives these 15 New Families to our Parish.



The Carpenter Family – Jamison, Yvonne, Cameron, Jayson & Taylor
The Cautilli Family – Carlo, Jacqueline, Christian & Alesandra
The Cabral Family – Beth, Daniel & Addison
The Schroeder Family – Barry, Jamie & Hailey
The Barrett Family – Nick, Jennifer, Russell & Max
The VanSaun Family – Richard, Marie, Sophia, Nathan & Elaina
The Jarboe Family – Sean, Colleen, Mason & Cooper
The Higgins Family – Michael, Jennifer, Alise, Maggie & Kate
The Harding Family – Bryan, Danielle, Nicholas, Olivia, Grace & Isla
The Hansbury Family – Kainne, Stacy, Kylie, Olivia & Addison
The Haddigan Family – David, Maureen, Jack, Kendall, Bridget & William
The Core Family – Lyle, Gina, Brandi, Ethan & Charles
The White Family – Edward, Andrea, Edward, Elizabeth, Christian & Amanda
The Lipson Family – Andrew, Wanda, Olivia & Benjamin
The Longval Family – David, Catherine, Patrick, Haley, Finn, Regan & Anna

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD ~

Thursday, December 31:
Vigil Mass at 7:00 PM

Friday, January 1, 2021:
Feast Day Mass at 9:00 AM

"We never give more honor to Jesus than when we honor His Mother, and we honor her simply to honor Him all the more perfectly. We go to her as a way leading to the goal we seek - Jesus, her Son."

- Saint Louis Marie de Montfort





FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Parish Family,

Family has been very much on my mind recently, as like many of you the Pandemic prevented me from travelling to be with my family on Thanksgiving Day. Thanks to the kindness of parishioners, I was well-stocked with Thanksgiving goodies at the rectory. But it was not the same as gathering at table with my parents, siblings, and many nieces and nephews. Thanksgiving is about more than food – it is about renewing the bonds of love that keep families united and at peace.

It is not by accident that Jesus chose a meal, the Holy Eucharist, to ensure those same gifts for His Family the Church. This is expressed beautifully in the Mass when the priest says, *"Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit."* The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus, Who is the great unifier – the One Who connects God to man, heaven to earth, the dead to the living, and believer to believer.

Sharing faithfully in the Eucharist each week is one of the most effective ways a family can foster unity, allowing Jesus to strengthen the love that draws them to God and to each other. *"The family that prays together, stays together,"* is a common sight on bumper stickers, but it is far more than a slogan. Those who invest time in their relationship with God by visiting His House, listening to His Word, and partaking of His Table, can only grow in the qualities so essential to Christian family life. Chief among these are patience, selflessness, fidelity, purity and humility.

Blessed Adolph Kolping once observed that, *"The first thing a person finds in life and the last to which he holds out his hand, and the most precious that he possesses, even if he does not realize it, is family life."* As a New Year is about to begin, let us each consider the place of family in our lives – both our individual families, and our faith family the Church. Let us try to renew these relationships as needed, recognizing them as opportunities to embrace sacrificial love and in so doing imitate Jesus.

With just one final Sunday of Advent standing between us and Christmas, I also make my annual call for you to please reach out to any of our Catholic brothers and sisters who have fallen away from the practice of their faith. Invite them to accompany you to Mass, or in these pandemic times to participate virtually. Tell them how much they are missed. Encourage them to come home to the Eucharist, a word which means "thanksgiving," and a celebration that is never so beautiful as when all the family is gathered together to share it.

May the Lord of Our Journey keep you and yours both physically healthy and spiritually safe.

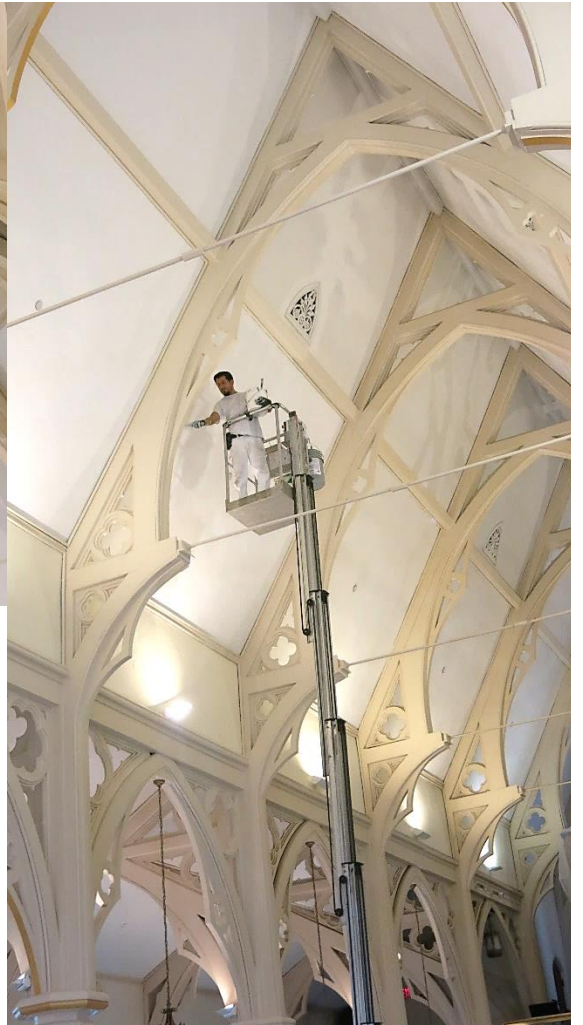
Under His Mercy,

Rev. Mark J. Coiro
Pastor



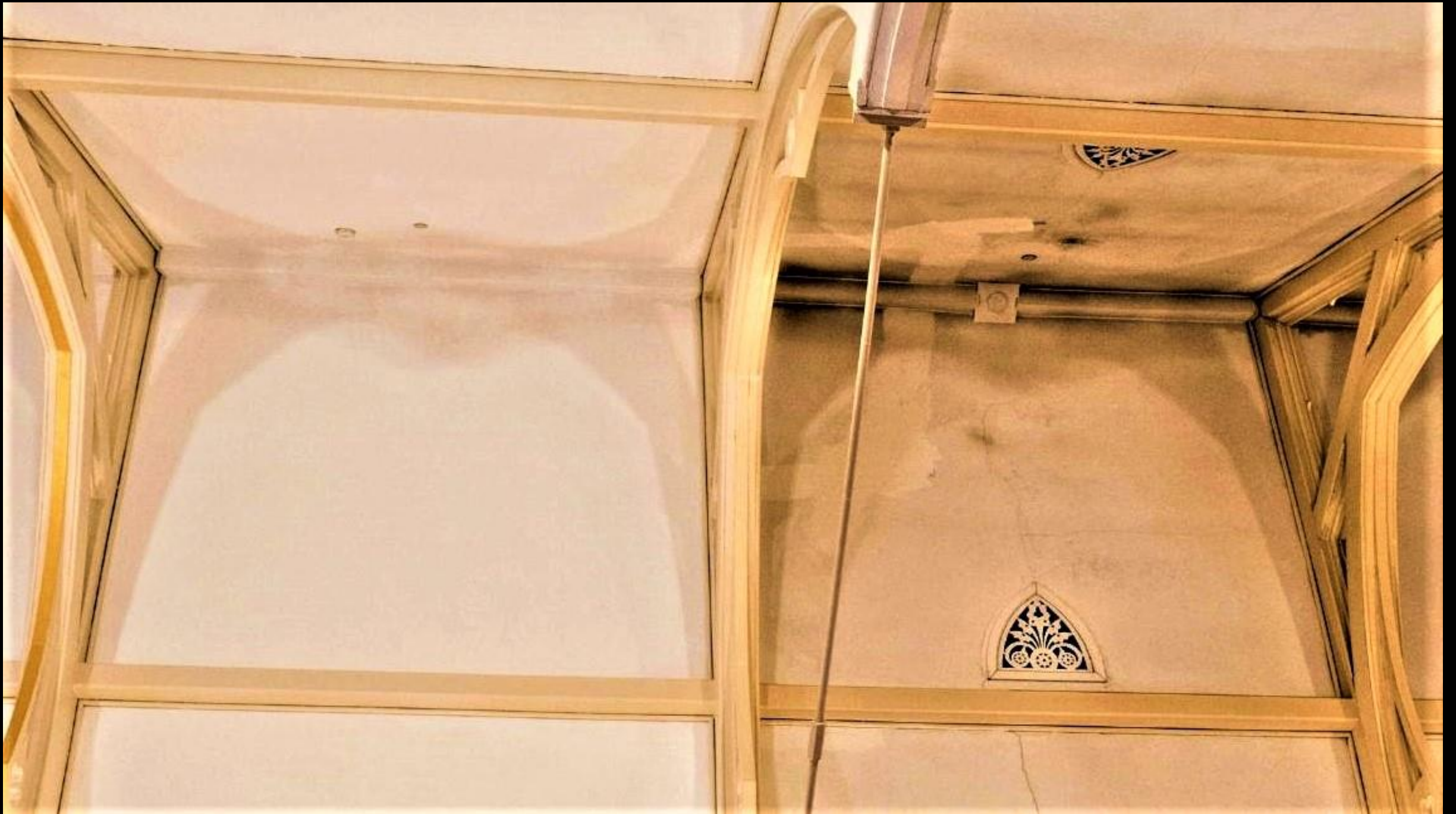
KEEPING THE FAITH

Recently, the Cavalier Family of our parish sent us this great photo. In it, seven-year-old Madeline Cavalier and five-year-old Henry Cavalier light the Advent Wreath on their kitchen table. Due to the pandemic, the family prays along virtually with St. Mary's livestreamed Mass each Sunday. As you can see in the blown-up cellphone image, the kids lit their wreath at the exact same moment that the church wreath was lit during Mass on the First Sunday of Advent. May God bless all our families working so hard to keep their children "connected" to their faith and holy worship.



**St. Mary's Church
ceilings and interior
walls are being
repaired and painted
for the first time
since 1994. The work
will be done in time
for Christmas
Masses. Happy 150th
Birthday St. Mary's!**





**Taken November 29, this halfway point in the ceiling repairs reveals the difference between before and after.
Many thanks to all whose Grand Annual participation is making this work possible!**

"A Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord."



Stewardship of Retired Priests ~ The 2020 Christmas Collection

There is only one collection at Christmas and every penny of it goes to support the housing and healthcare costs of our retired priests – holy men who have given their entire lives in service to God's people. The Clergy Fund that provides for their needs is currently underfunded. So please, if you can, try to make a truly sacrificial gift for our priests at this year's Christmas collection. Please also pray for these wonderful men. On behalf of all our retired priests, THANK YOU! Christmas Collection envelopes or checks may be mailed in or dropped through the Rectory Office mail-slot, (vertical brass panel to left of the door). You may also use Automatic Giving or WeShare to designate your gift electronically.

Stewardship of Parish ~ The 2020 Grand Annual

Thank you to all who have already done their part in this year's Grand Annual – the single most important collection at our parish each year. For fifty-eight years, combined with the weekly offertory, the Grand Annual has allowed our parish to cover its operating costs.

We ask every single family of our parish to please participate in the Grand Annual, doing the best they can according to their means. Thank you and God bless you. *"No one shall appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each of you with as much as he can give, in proportion to the blessings which the Lord, God has bestowed on you."* - Deuteronomy 16

2020 ST. MARY'S PARISH GRAND ANNUAL UPDATE FOR 12/06/20

2020 Grand Annual goal to cover operating expenses: \$ 150,000.00

Grand Annual parishioner support received to date: - \$ 126,850.00

Parishioner support still needed to reach 2020 Grand Annual goal: \$ 23,150.00

% of 2020 Grand Annual achieved as of December 6: **85 %**

% of St. Mary's families who have now made their Grand Annual gift: **39 %**



Please return the gold Grand Annual envelope you received in the mail as soon as possible. These, or any envelope marked "Grand Annual," may be mailed in or dropped through the Rectory Office mail-slot, (vertical brass panel to left of door). You may also use Automatic Giving or WeShare to designate your gift electronically.

As explained in the November mailing to all parishioners, the \$150,000 goal will be applied to cover Salaries for St. Mary's dedicated and hardworking staff, as well as the plaster repairs and complete repainting of St. Mary's Church interior. This is the first interior painting of our church in twenty-six years (see previous page). Your generous support will assure the financial health of our parish continues.

Thank you for your support of this most important annual collection!

OUR SISTER PARISH

بيت ساحور

OUR LADY OF FATIMA IN BEIT SAHOUR



A Christmas Message to the People of St. Mary's from Fr. Issa, Pastor of Our Lady's, Beit Sahour ~

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ of the Parish of Saint Mary / Holliston,

First, I would like to thank Fr. Mark for allowing me to address our twin parishioners in this blessed time, the Advent.

Nowadays, we all share the same circumstances and challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic crisis has seriously harmed us all, and consequently we are deprived of enjoying our daily life and the beautiful moments as before. Indeed, the pandemic has taken the life of many of our beloved ones, and every day we hear about new cases many of which end in death. We feel now powerless. Therefore, we acknowledge our weakness in confronting our invisible enemy. We are physically, psychologically, socially, and economically paralyzed because of home confinement, as if we lie alive in limbo.

Yet, in the midst of these dire circumstances and of this paralysis, the Advent comes to remind us that the joy of Christmas is coming soon, where the Child Jesus (The Life) is born. Christmas invites us to follow the footsteps of the shepherds of Beit Sahour to look up to the highest where the angels are, and to discover the joy of God's loving presence in our life. It also invites us to move spiritually with the shepherds to the Manger of Bethlehem, to in spirit life in us again through Jesus Christ.

God wanted His Son to live among us, and so His name is Emmanuel. He loves us and will never leave us. We are called to experience His presence and to keep Him in our heart during this difficult time. His love for us does not necessarily mean that he spares us from these circumstances, but rather makes us realize that He is present with us and cares for us. Thus, when we are happy, He is with us, and when we suffer, He will also be with us.

Dear brothers and sisters; we can experience God's presence in this blessed time through vigil and repentance. Vigil means that we can read the signs of God's presence in our daily life in all details, regardless of how simple they are, and this can be realized in our daily prayer and in hearing his word. Yet, repentance means that we turn to Him with all our hearts, acknowledging our helplessness, our weakness, and our desperate need for Him and for His love. That is how, my dear brothers and sisters, we are ready to meet God through the Child Jesus.



I wish you a blessed and joyful Christmas, full of life, love, and of God's merciful presence. Please remember us in your prayer, and we in turn, will pray for you and for your beloved ones, especially those who left you for eternal life, where there is no crying, pain, sickness, or sorrow, but lasting joy and peace with the Lord and with his Mother, the Virgin Mary. God bless you all.

Father Issa Hijazeen
Pastor of the Church of the Virgin Mary
Our Lady of Fatima, Beit Sahour, Palestine

OUR SISTER PARISH بيت ساحور OUR LADY OF FATIMA IN BEIT SAHOUR



English Book Donations ~

We are happy to report that the second box of book donations given by the people of St. Mary's, Holliston, has arrived safely at our Sister Parish's School in Beit Sahour. (Photo Left). They are most grateful for these, as they assist the children in learning the English language. The Latin Patriarchate School in Beit Sahour was founded in 1864. At that time, it was a very small school, and the number of students and teachers was limited. The school continued to expand until the 1970s when it consisted of nine classes and kindergarten. In 2003, the school became a full secondary institution and the first "High School" class graduated in 2005.

2020-2021 Holliston - Holy Land Friendship Scholarship Recipients ~

Through this new scholarship program, St. Mary's has committed to fully fund a year's education at the Beit Sahour Patriarchate School for one boy and one girl, to be chosen by Our Lady's Parish - one each from the "Middle School" and from the "High School." The cost is roughly \$1,200 per student, so the cost to St. Mary's is about \$2,500 in total. The students who benefit from the scholarship have shown a strong commitment to their studies and have a demonstrated need. This year's Inaugural Scholarship Recipients are:



Photo Left, Malak Majdi Hanna Odeh,
15 years old, Grade 9.

Click here to see a video message from Malak:

<https://rb.gy/x5o05o>

+++++

Photo Right, Andrea Elias Salim Jaraisseh,
11 years old, Grade 5, goes by "Andy."

Click here to see a video message from Andy:

<https://rb.gy/xtttub>

HOLLISTON – HOLY LAND FRIENDSHIP SCHOLARSHIP SPECIAL COLLECTION

January 9 & 10, 2021

Kindly contribute to the Second Collection on this weekend to support Malak and Andy. This once a year collection funds the Scholarship Program that will be such a huge blessing in the lives of children at our Sister Parish!



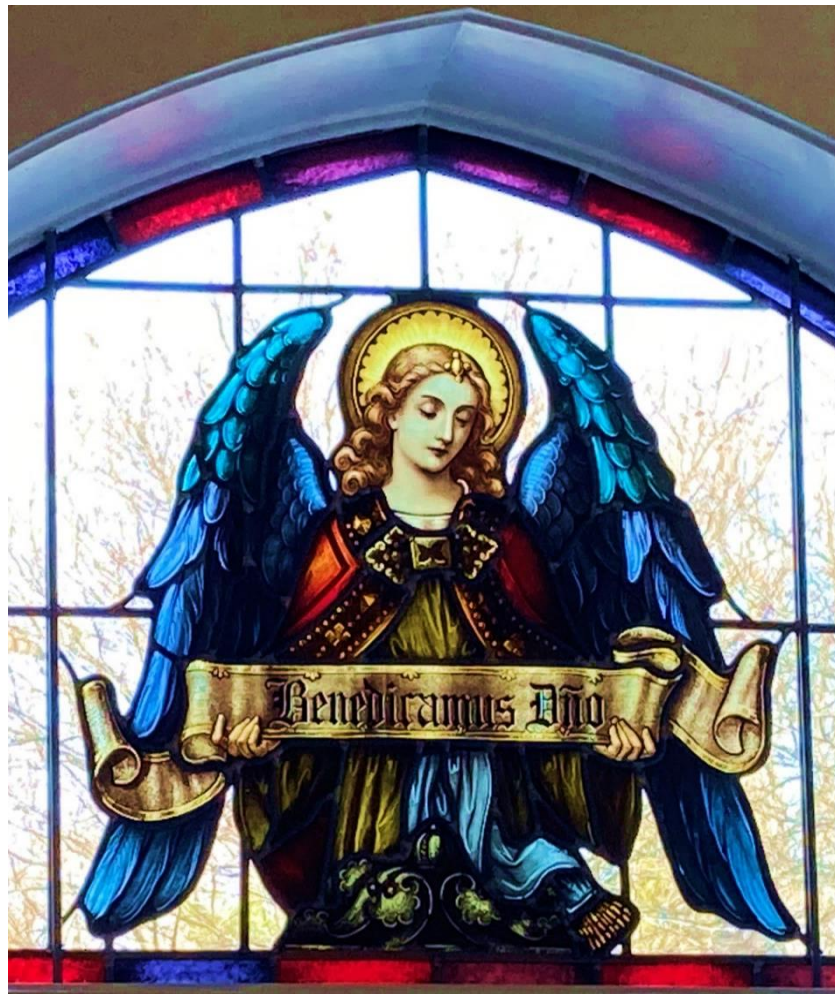
AN ANGEL COMES TO ST. MARY'S

Eleven years ago, a widow of our parish made a bequest to St. Mary's. Her will stipulated, however, that the gift was *"not for use in paying bills, but to add something of beauty to the parish that generations to come will be able to enjoy."*

The widow's request was finally realized on November 24, 2020, with the installation of a stained-glass window above the double doors leading from St. Mary's parking lot into the Parish Center.

The window depicts an angel bearing a scroll which in Latin reads, *"Let us bless the Lord!"* The other stipulation of the will was that the gift remain anonymous. But when you see this new addition to St. Mary's, we hope you will say a prayer for the repose of the woman who gave it.

Where did the angel originate? St. Mary's new angel was crafted in the late 1890's in Germany by the Franz Zettler Studio. Like the stained-glass windows in St. Mary's Church, it was made in what became known as the "Munich Style." In this method, the religious



scenes are painted on larger sheets of glass, and then fused to the glass through firing in intense heat. This allows for a blending of colors not attainable by the old medieval style, in which any change of color in a scene required a separate piece of colored glass. The leaded seams do not interrupt or intrude upon the images portrayed but are camouflaged by the design in a way that makes them hardly noticeable. This style also allows for extremely detailed depictions of the subjects.



The thousands of stained-glass windows executed by the Franz Zettler Studio for cathedrals, churches, and chapels all over the world include: by order of Pope Pius X in 1912, a stained glass window for St. Peter's Church in Rome, Italy, representing the dove, symbol of the Holy Ghost, surrounded by golden rays; a number of windows in four chapels of the North American College in Vatican City; and many of the stained-glass windows in Roman Catholic cathedrals in the cities of the United States, such as Buffalo, Cleveland, Covington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, St. Augustine, and Spokane.



The Franz Zettler stained-glass angel now at St. Mary's Parish in Holliston, was originally created for Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Central Falls, Rhode Island, (church photo above left; angel in its original window configuration above right). This church was torn down in 1989, and for the last thirty-one years the angel has been in a dark crate in warehouse storage. How lovely that this beautiful piece of art is now in a window again, bringing light, color, and beauty to the people of God. We think the widow would be pleased!

The Process: St. Mary's chose the angel from a collection of stored pieces owned by the New England Stained Glass Company of North Attleboro, Massachusetts. Their artists then proposed layouts by which it might be re-purposed into the clear, arched window above the Parish Center doors. It was decided to go with a clear glass arrangement, centering the angel, with a multicolored border along the window frame. These photos show the project in progress.



Pattern layout.



Selecting colors for the border.



Cutting the glass.



Painting the colored glass borders.



Leading and soldering.



Installation day at St. Mary's.



Safe in a new home.

"Benedicamus Domino!" The significance of ***"Let us bless the Lord!"*** In the Psalms, we often find verses that speak of blessing the Lord. For example, Psalm 104:1 reads, *"Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty."* Psalm 16:7 notes, *"I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me."*

But what does it mean that we can bless God? If God is perfect, how can we bless Him? To bless God simply means to praise Him or to honor His name. The Hebrew word translated "bless" in the Old Testament literally means "to kneel," indicating the idea of honoring the Lord. We do not add anything to Him when we bless Him, yet we worship Him as our appropriate response to His greatness and His love for us. Psalm 103:1-5 includes the idea of complete worship of the Lord without holding back: *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, Who forgives all your iniquity, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy."* May our new angel remind us always to bless the Lord!



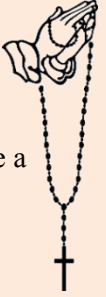
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

St. Mary's Council #14224 January, 2021

Grand Knight: Albert Scaramella
Deputy Grand Knight: Tom Anguish

MONTHLY ROSARY:

The next Rosary will be prayed on Wednesday, January 20. It will likely be a "Zoom" conference at 7:00 PM. "Zoom" details will be sent to all Knights.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE AT ST. MARY'S: The Council will sponsor the drive on Saturday, January 16, 2021 in Father Haley Hall from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Due to COVID-19 state restrictions, appointments are required. **No walk-ins can be allowed.** To schedule an appointment, contact 1-800-REDCROSS or visit redcrossblood.org and search by zip code (01746) in the "Find a Blood Drive" field for the 1/16/2021 Blood Drive. Donors will be required to wear a mask, social distance and take a temperature check at the door. For further information, contact the Council Blood Drive Coordinator Rodman Burgett at 508-653-6130.

U.S. blood donation facts

And why you should consider donating



Someone in the U.S.
**needs blood every
2 seconds.**



One donation can
potentially **save up
to 3 lives.**



Only **3 percent**
of people in the U.S.
give blood in a year.



One pint of blood
is taken during a regular
blood donation.



A single car crash victim
can require as many as
100 pints of blood.



Less than 38 percent
of the population is
eligible to give blood.



Less than 10 percent
donate annually.

MEMORIAL MASS FOR DECEASED FOURTH DEGREE KNIGHTS: The McSweeney Assembly held the Mass on November 19 in remembrance of deceased Fourth Degree Knights. The name of deceased Sir Knight John Hand of our Council was read and a candle lit in his memory. The Mass was held at St. Luke's parish in Westborough.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS "CATHOLIC CITIZENSHIP ESSAY" and "KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS POSTER" CONTESTS: The contests closed December 5, 2020. Entries are currently being judged. Winners to be announced later. Good luck!

MONTHLY ROSARY AND COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD BY "ZOOM": Due to COVID-19, the Council recited the Rosary and held the business meeting via "ZOOM" in December.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE FOR 2020: All good St. Mary's men eighteen and older are invited to join our Council. The Knights of Columbus is the largest Catholic men's lay organization in the world. Our Council respects members limited time but needs new members to share our faith journey as Catholic men. For membership information contact Grand Knight Albert Scaramella at 508-561-0584 OR ajscaramella@comcast.net OR you can now join ON-LINE by going to the Supreme K of C website kofc.org/joinus. On-line membership allows you to obtain all K of C benefits including outstanding insurance plans and optional membership in our St. Mary's Council.

women in WINGS God's spirit

Save the Date - WINGS Winter Program, Wednesdays, January 27 - February 24, 2021

Details of the Winter Program will be announced in an upcoming bulletin and on our Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/WingsHolliston.

The Program begins at 10:00 AM via Zoom. (No WINGS 2/17/21 due to school vacation.) Email stmaryswingssecretary@gmail.com with questions or call Jen at 617-852-9632.

The WINGS ministry provides an opportunity for Catholic women to **deepen their faith and grow closer to God**. The fall program featured speakers addressing topics on **The Centrality of the Eucharist**. Using the gift of Zoom, WINGS members were able to **Deepen their Relationship with Christ**, through speaker presentations and group discussions. Some memorable take-aways include:

- ❖ The Eucharist is **one zillion times more powerful** than an atomic bomb.
- ❖ When we sit in front of Jesus, our **prayers are more powerful!**
- ❖ When we receive the Eucharist, we **receive the total Christ** (His humanity and His divinity.)
- ❖ Jesus in the Eucharist is the **same flesh that Mary held in her womb**.
- ❖ God wants to share his very life with us. He **holds nothing back**.
- ❖ Receiving the Eucharist should **change how we live and act**. That is the key to conversion.
- ❖ Our relationship with God is not passive. It's like dancing with a partner. If we seek to know God's will, **we need to trust Him**, our partner. We need to let him love us.
- ❖ We meet the **God of love** in the Mass.
- ❖ Before coming to Mass, we should make an Act of Contrition. We want **"the house of our soul" to be uncluttered for Jesus**.

EUCCHARISTIC HOME BLESSINGS

As part of our Parish's Celebration of the "Year of the Eucharist," St. Mary's clergy are blessing the homes of parishioners with the Blessed Sacrament. The blessing is done from outdoors with social distancing. May the houses and apartments so blessed be protected in every way as the Presence of Our Lord is strengthened within them. To have your home blessed, call Mary Beth at 508-429-4427, or email her at St.Marys1870@gmail.com. Our priest or one of our three deacons will then contact you to set up a time for the blessing, at which the whole family should be present. Start out the New Year by inviting Jesus in the Eucharist to bless your home!

Photo Below: Three special "mini-Monstrances" that St. Mary's has prepared for use in Blessing your homes.





Troop 14 Holliston

Boy Scouts of America
St. Mary's Parish * January, 2021

Meetings: Monday Nights 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Lower Church Hall (Suspended)

Contact: Chris Baribeau, Scoutmaster
508.579.4357

Email: Troop14Holliston@yahoo.com

Website: www.hollistonTroop14.com

St. Mary's Boy Scout Troop 14 is meeting outdoors during the Pandemic, Lower Church & Fr. Haley Hall soon. If interested in joining Troop 14, contact the Scoutmaster. It is an ideal organization for Boys 11-17 years old.

Upcoming Events

- January Snowshoe Hike TBD, pending COVID restrictions

BSA'S & TROOP 14'S ANNUAL "SCOUTING FOR FOOD" SERVICE PROJECT: Due to the Pandemic, the demand on the Holliston Pantry Shelf is greater now than ever. For the 14th year, Troop 14 with Twenty Boy Scouts, Eight Cub Scouts, Scout Leaders and parents, spent several hours on November 7 distributing 1,845 custom made door hangers to fifteen Holliston neighborhoods. On November 14, they retraced their routes and collected over 548 bags (which equals over 5,500 pounds of food). This was a 29% increase over last year's total, all to benefit the local families who rely on the Holliston Pantry Shelf. Thanks to all who donated food and helped make this our most successful Food Drive ever! Photos below.



TWO EAGLE PROJECTS COMPLETED:

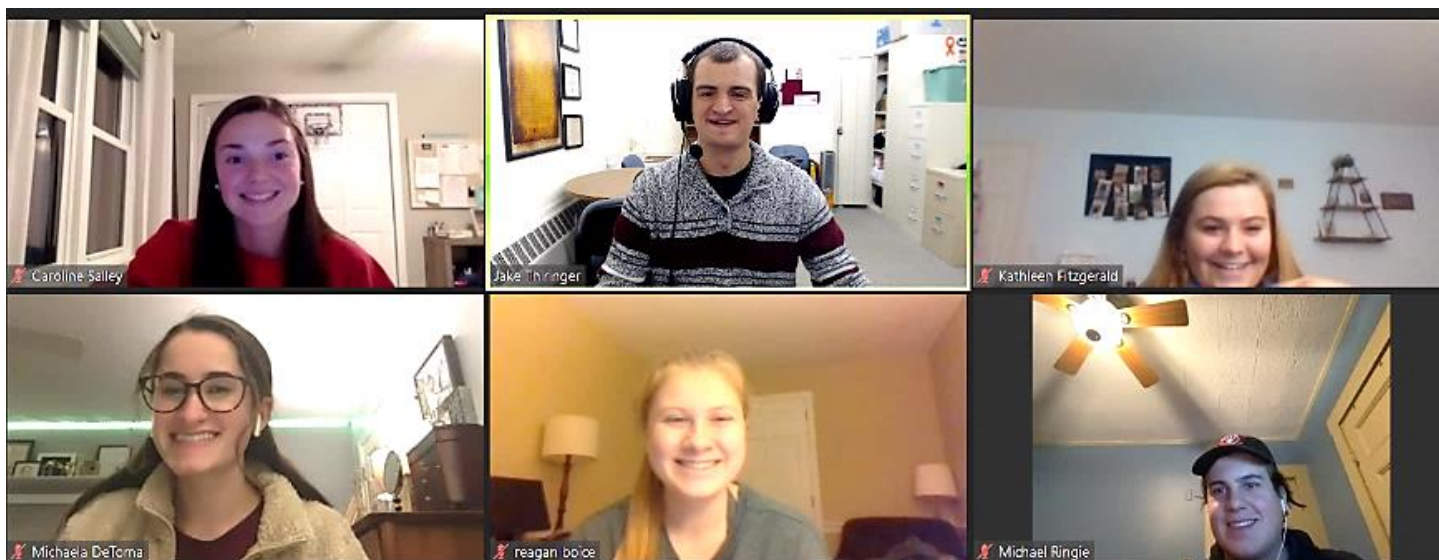
Two Troop 14 Scouts planned, scheduled and completed their Eagle Projects this past fall. Over several weekends, following approved COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures, Brendan Climer and Trevor Fleischman recruited Troop 14 Scouts, leaders and family to work on their projects.

- Brendan Climer, photo left, installed 100 square feet of stone pavers around a recently erected outdoor altar on the grounds of the Fatima Shrine. The project also included creating a path leading to the altar.

- Trevor Fleischman, photo above right, developed two picnic areas at scenic portions of the Holliston Rail Trail. The Project included building picnic tables for each location. Brendan and Trevor both have now completed their Eagle requirements, submitted their Eagle Applications for approval, and are awaiting their Boards of Review.



TROOP 14 HAS TWO MORE NEW EAGLE SCOUTS: Congratulations go out to Troop 14's Griffin Ripley and Brandon Paradie who have completed all the requirements and passed their Eagle Boards of Review, earning Scouting's highest rank. Griffin passed his Board of Review on November 19, and Brandon passed his Board of Review on December 17. All total, Troop 14 has 79 Eagle Scouts since it was first Chartered to St. Mary's Parish, 55 years ago.



St. Mary's Upperclassmen Share Their Faith Through Religious Education Teen Leader Program

With 131 teens in our Grades 9 and 10 Confirmation prep program, teaching them all is no small task. At St. Mary's, we are incredibly appreciative for all of our volunteer group leaders, catechists, coordinators, monitors and all who work to make our faith formation program possible. This holds even truer this year as we have had to adjust to a hybrid online and in person learning style. This month we want to highlight our Teen Leader program. Teen Leaders are already confirmed juniors and seniors who in addition to their lives of worship and prayer, volunteer their time to help with the faith formation of teens a few years younger than them.

This academic year we are blessed to have five awesome teen leaders assist with our Grade 9 Tuesday Confirmation prep class. These are juniors Caroline Salley and Kathleen Fitzgerald and seniors Michaela DeToma, Reagan Boice, and Michael Ringie (pictured above alongside youth minister Jake Thiringer). These teen leaders work with our adult leaders to facilitate activities, discussions, and learning among the teens preparing for Confirmation.

When asked why they volunteer with this ministry, Michaela noted, "I really enjoy being able to bring a youthful perspective of our Catholic Faith to the teens preparing for Confirmation in addition to the adult perspective they receive from their parents and the other teachers". Kathleen remarked, "My mom was my teacher all throughout my faith formation and I want to follow in her footsteps and help others grow in their Catholic Faith the same way my mom helped me and my classmates."

We have seen many benefits of the teen leader program throughout the last few years. First off, empowering upperclassmen to share their faith helps them take ownership of it and prepares them to live and share their faith in the years to come. This program is also a benefit to our teens preparing for confirmation, as they are inspired by the faith lives of teens just a few years older than them and feel more inclined to participate and share. Oftentimes, teen leaders inspire those they teach to be teen leaders once they are Confirmed, therefore continuing the cycle and being a blessing for many years to come.

Happier Days ~

Due to the Pandemic, 2020 marks the first time in sixteen years that St. Mary's Middle School Youth Group has not sent an army of Christmas Carolers to serenade and bring joy to the residents of our nearby Nursing Homes. We look forward to a time when such visits are possible again. This year our Youth Group teens were asked to pray for the health and safety of the Nursing Home residents instead.





New Year's Resolutions for Catholics



By Patti Maguire Armstrong

With Christmas nearly upon us, it's a good time to contemplate the New Year in light of the gift of the Christ child. What does his coming mean to you and how can you take that with you into 2021? Diet, exercise, and quitting smoking are typical New Year's resolutions. Improved health is great, but for Christians with our sights on heaven, we can do better. Let's not forget the spiritual realm where improvements last longer than a lifetime. Here are suggestions to consider while setting goals for a holier year.

Commit Random Acts of Prayer. Resolve to pray for at least one person each day who does not even know you or perhaps would never suspect you would pray for them. It could a public figure, or someone in a passing car, or in the grocery line. Better yet, pick someone who has been nasty to you, or cut you off in traffic.

See Jesus More Often. Make a commitment to visit Jesus in the tabernacle. The more you give of your time to Jesus, the more he can give to you.

Do a good deed every day, no matter how small. When I was a kid we used to say: "I'm rubber and you're glue, whatever you say bounces off of me and sticks to you." Think of God telling us: "I'm God and I made you, whatever you do for others comes back to you."

Find a Charity to Donate Time or Money. By giving to others, we accumulate everlasting treasure. Consider also visiting a lonely relative, an elderly neighbor, or a young mother who could use some help.

Read the Bible. Protestants think Catholics don't read the Bible. Prove them wrong.

Go to one more Mass. If you don't always go to Sunday Mass, resolve NEVER to miss Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. If you only go on Sundays, find another day you are not obligated to go and simply attend for the extra graces and for the love of Jesus. If you go daily, try to get more out of it and really focus.

Turn your Dial to Catholic TV and Radio. Find some Catholic programming you enjoy and make a point to tune in regularly. Have you tried WQOM 1060 AM – Boston's Catholic Radio?

Read Catholic Literature and Listen to CD's.

There's no lack of such resources. It's the next best thing to going on a retreat.

Fast a Day or Two During the Week. Jesus fasted for 40 days. Scripture says, "And when you fast..." (Matt 16:6) not *if* you fast. There's power in fasting. How you fast is up to you. Bread and water is too extreme for many. You can fast from TV or Facebook, or simply eat for nutrition i.e., plain tuna, broccoli and dry toast--not so tasty but maintains health while sacrificing. Or, consider leaving something out at every meal such as no mayonnaise on your sandwich or dressing on your salad. Make it a pure gift to God, not a diet for you.

Go to Confession more often. It's a gift Jesus gave to us after his Resurrection. He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 21:22). Just prior to giving them the power to forgive sins, Jesus sent them out into the world to act in his place: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." The only other time the Bible mentions God breathing on anyone was in Genesis 2:7 when he breathed life into the first human beings. Likewise, confession breathes new life into our souls.

Don't dismay if you keep bringing the same sins back to Confession. I had a friend tell me that she told the priest she was embarrassed to keep confessing the same sins. The priest chuckled. "Just be glad you aren't bringing any new ones in," he said. It's about improvement, not perfection.



*Only God knows the good that can come
by reading one good Catholic book.*

Saint John Bosco

ADULT FAITH RESOURCES

JANUARY 2021

got faith?

FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES: January 2021 delivers two programs of adult faith formation. **First**, beginning on Saturday, January 9 and going for two more Saturdays, January 16 and 23, we will offer a three-session reading/discussion of Pope Benedict's 2007 Post-synodal Exhortation on the Eucharist, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (*Sacrament of Love*). The group will meet on Zoom, from 10 to 11 AM. **Second**, beginning on Sunday, January 31 and continuing until Palm Sunday, March 28, we will offer, via Zoom, the *JustFaith* program called Faith and Racial Equity: Exploring Power and Privilege. *JustFaith* states that this program “awakens small groups to the economic systems, public policies, cultural norms, and hidden biases that empower some and oppress others.” Contact Leo Racine at 508-429-7476 or leoracine@msn.com for information about, or to register for either program.

ENVIRONMENT: The Vatican document, *JOURNEYING TOWARDS CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME: Five Years after Laudato Si'* has been released in English. You can find it at <http://bit.ly/LaudatoSiJourney>. The document is a product of the Interdicasterial Working Group of the Holy See on Integral Ecology and was released in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home*. Each of the 24 general sections of the document includes a statement of good practices and a list of some concrete lines of action. Check out the document and see what you can do to help care for our common home.

SUNDAY READINGS: We celebrate liturgies of both the Christmas Season and Ordinary Time during this month. The Christmas Season extends to the Sunday feast of Jesus' Baptism, this year held on January 10. The next three Sundays in January are ones of Ordinary Time, beginning with the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time on January 17. The readings on January 17 and January 24 remind us of God's call to us to follow him. Both weeks have Old Testament readings about the call of prophets and the gospels focus on Jesus' call of his first apostles. How is Jesus calling you to be of service to him and your community? You can prepare for each Sunday's readings at <https://liturgy.slu.edu/>.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: The 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18-25. This week of prayer is held every year at the same time; the theme this year is from the Gospel of John, Chapter 15: “Abide in my love...you shall bear much fruit.” Preparation of this year's prayer was assumed by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland (<https://www.grandchamp.org/>). On the Graymoor website about the week of prayer, <https://bit.ly/UnityPrayerWeek>, you will find a very informative history of this annual observance and an inspirational write-up about the background to this year's theme; there are also a number of prayer and liturgical resources. The conclusion of the background write-up states things perfectly: “Human society is reminded that through the struggle of 2020 we are needier for love, fellowship and support than we have been in generations. So, let the sap flow! Let us bear much fruit.”



YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST: The Eucharist: *A Mystery of Faith*. Pope Benedict, in his Eucharistic exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (<https://bit.ly/SacramentumCaritatis>), highlights these words spoken at Mass - *The Mystery of Faith* - and refers to “the substantial change of bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus” as “a reality which surpasses all human understanding” (6, emphasis added). The US Bishops remind us, however, that “a lack of faith on the part of the person eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ cannot change what these are, but it does prevent the person from obtaining the spiritual benefit, which is communion with Christ.” (<https://bit.ly/USCCBTheRealPresence>, 10). – Leo Racine