

The Feast of the Holy Family

December 31, 2023



Transfiguration of the Lord Parish

Saint Mary 14 Park Street + Sacred Heart 58 Church Street + Saint Mark 105 Stanley Street
North Attleborough, Massachusetts

Transfiguration of the Lord Parish

Rev. David A. Costa, Pastor
Rev. Deacon Joseph E. Regali, Parish Deacon
Sister Kathleen A. Corrigan, S.U.S.C., Pastoral Associate
Rev. Kenneth R. Sicard, O.P. & Rev. R. Gabriel Pivarnik, O.P., Weekend Assistants
Mrs. Martha O'Neill, Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Jean Howard, Business Manager
Mrs. Elaine Corvese, Director of Religious Education
Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal, Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School
Mr. Adam Turcotte, Director of Music
Mr. Miguel Peixoto, Buildings Supervisor
Mr. James Kitsock, Building Maintenance

Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School

Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal
57 Richards Avenue,
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760
(508) 695-3072 FAX (508) 695-9074
smsh@smsh.dfrcs.org www.smshschool.com

Saint Mary Cemetery

Mr. Jarrod Ward, Superintendent
Towne Street
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760
(508) 695-1173 or email ripco@comcast.net

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saint Mary Church • Saturday 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Sacrament of Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on designated Sunday afternoons at 12:30 pm, with a limit of four families at each baptism. Please contact the office at stmaryna@noozi.com for more information and available dates/locations.

Sacrament of Marriage

Marriage is usually celebrated on Saturday morning and afternoon. Please contact the Parish Office at least nine months in advance to begin preparation.

Sacrament of the Sick

Pastoral care to those in need of the sacrament of the sick is arranged through the parish office. Please call to arrange a visit.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is offered on the first Friday of each month in **Saint Mark Church** beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 6:00 pm with Benediction.

Parish Offering

If you are attending in person, you may drop your contribution in the collection basket. You are welcome to mail your budget envelope to the parish office, at 14 Park Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760. You may also leave your envelope in the drop box located outside the parish office door, to the right on the landing. Or you can use this link for online giving:

<https://chms.ecatholic.com/guest/mafrdiocese/31>

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Weekend Masses

Saturday 4:00 pm **Saint Mary Church**
Sunday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**
Sunday 9:30 am **Saint Mary Church**
Sunday 11:00 am **Sacred Heart Church**

Weekday Masses

Monday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**
Tuesday 4:30 pm **Saint Mark Church**
Wednesday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**
Thursday 8:00 am Communion Service
Saint Mark Church

Links to: Transfiguration of the Lord Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/Transfiguration-of-the-Lord-Parish-North-Attleborough-106529317647894/>

YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/ysfaxaty>

Parish Office

14 Park Street, North Attleborough,
Massachusetts 02760
Parish e-mail • stmaryna@noozi.com
Parish website • www.saintmaryna.com
Phone 508-695-6161 Fax 508-695-5248
Faith Formation • TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com
Faith Formation • 508-695-3823
Music Ministry • transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com



December 30/31 – The Feast of the Holy Family

Saturday	December 30 – Vigil (St. Mary)
4:00 pm	Rita Kelleher
	Grace Miniscalco
Sunday	December 31 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Joseph Dery
Sunday	December 31 (St. Mary)
9:30 am	Deceased Members of the Dowgiala Family
Sunday	December 31 (Sacred Heart)
11:00 am	Tricia Hand Seery

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Monday	January 1 (St. Mark)
9:00 am	Rita Kelleher
Tuesday	January 2 (St. Mark)
4:30 pm	People of the Parish
Wednesday	January 3 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Lillian Poirier
Thursday	January 4 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	People of the Parish

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January 6/7 – The Epiphany of the Lord

Saturday	January 6 – Vigil (St. Mary)
4:00 pm	Angelina & Robert Wilcox
	Eleanor & Frank Golden
Sunday	January 7 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Edward A. Rogers
Sunday	January 7 (St. Mary)
9:30 am	Robert Toole
	Jeanette & Henry Dupras
Sunday	January 7 (Sacred Heart)
11:00 am	Kate & Jack McNamara
	Derlyn Phillips Parenteau

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Parish Contributions

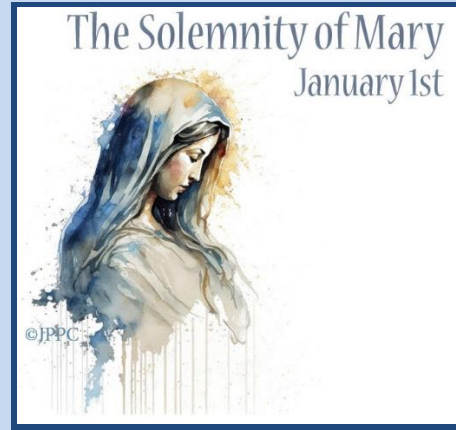
Collection for December 16/17: \$11,942.85

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Tuesday Communal Rosary Schedule

Tuesday, January 2, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, January 9, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, January 16, 2024: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)
 Tuesday, January 23, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, January 30, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, February 6, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, February 13, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

January 1: New Year's Day



As January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, falls on a Monday this year, it is **NOT** observed as a holy day of obligation. We **WILL** celebrate Mass on Monday, **January 1**, at **9:00 am** in **Saint Mark Church**. The Mass will be live streamed.

Please note that the office will be closed on **Monday, January 1**. Your patient understanding is very much appreciated!

Bulletin Submissions

Please note that due to anticipated delivery issues with FedEx during the entire 2023 holiday season, all transmission dates have been moved up by our publisher. Anyone wishing to submit a notice should email it as early as possible and include the dates you would like the notice to appear. It will be published in the earliest weekend available.

2023 Annual Appeal

It is with profound gratitude and much pride, that I write this report for the 2023 Grand Annual Appeal. Our statistics are as follows:

Total # of households contacted:	3,334
Total # of responses:	659
Total % of participation:	19.77%
Total amount donated/pledged:	\$213,602.00
Total amount paid:	\$212,127.00
Average pledge:	\$324.13
% of pledged collected:	99.31 %

While the “official” appeal period has ended, anyone wishing to make a contribution to the Annual Appeal, may do so at any time. This is especially true as we look toward end-of-year contributions for 2023 tax purposes.

Please know my sincere thanks for your tremendous generosity to Transfiguration of the Lord Parish. The trust you have shown is humbling and your support is encouraging and very much appreciated. May you know God’s fullest blessings!
 ~Fr. Costa

thank you, thank you, thank you!

2023 Christmas Fair Report

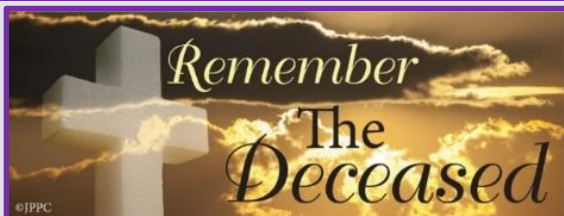
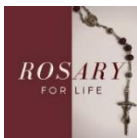
Many, many thanks to all who contributed so generously in so many different ways to make the 2023 Transfiguration of the Lord Christmas Fair such a resounding success! A profit of **\$41,326.00** was raised for parish use! This amazing amount reflects the hard work, enthusiastic spirit, and generous sharing of gifts and talents by a large army of parishioners. Here are the Fair statistics:

50/50 raffle	\$1,933.25
Evergreens	\$4,601.00
What-Not Shoppe	\$2,312.75
Wine Wheel	\$1,020.00
Bakery	\$1,170.00
Candy	\$820.00
Raffle Baskets	\$10,843.00
Sewing & Knitting	\$1,593.00
Café	\$1,217.00
Festival of Trees	\$5,803.00
Silent Auction	\$5,826.00
Sponsors:	<u>\$4,187.00</u>
Total:	\$41,326.00

In addition to the dedicated committee members and volunteers, we would like to thank our most generous sponsors who supported the Fair: Knights of Columbus Council #330, Union St. Jean Baptiste #42/Catholic Financial Life, Dyer-Lake Funeral Home & Cremation Services, LLC, Sperry & McHoul Funeral Home, Lucy & Carlos Santos/Dunkin' Donuts, the Welter Family, the Flynn Family, Nolan's Flowers & Gifts, Bell's Powder Coating, Inc., and Sirois Bicycle Shop, Inc. May God abundantly bless your generosity! ~Fr. Costa

Rosary for Life

The Respect Life Committee of Transfiguration of the Lord Parish is pleased to announce that we will lead a Rosary for Life at 4:00 pm, prior to the 4:30 pm daily Mass in **Saint Mark Church** on the *first, second, fourth, and fifth Tuesday* of each month. The communal Rosary is also livestreamed for any participants who wish to join us remotely.



Please Pray for our Deceased:

Ronald E. Rioux

Dillon E. Achin

Helen Brissette

Jonathan M. Kirby

H. William "Bill" Donnelly

*Eternal rest grant unto our beloved dead, O Lord.
Let perpetual light shine upon them.*



Saint Padre Pio once said:

"A thousand years of enjoying human glory is not worth even an hour spent sweetly communing with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament."

Please join us at **Saint Mark church** on Friday, **January 5th**, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. with Benediction. Remember, as we share in the work of Redemption, so will we be rewarded with our own redemption.

For more information call Joanne Regali (508-643-3821) or Arlene Hall (508-801-2243). Please leave a message if the call is not answered immediately.

January Women's Guild Meeting

The Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Women's Guild will be meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at **6:00 p.m.** in the St. Mary's Parish Center. We are really excited about our next Guild Event. Back by popular demand will be our **"Brown Bag Auction"**. We guarantee that this evening will be fun-filled with lots of laughter, fun, and great friendships as we ring in the New Year. All you need to bring is a brown bag with some sort of small gift in it (please no gently used gifts). Please ensure it is sealed and/or taped up but leave a corner open so the auctioneers can peek. We will raffle all the bags off that evening and you never know what you'll get! RSVP to Debbie Fitzgibbons at debbiefitzgibbons@gmail.com or (978) 884-1945 or Karen Finocchi at finocchik@hotmail.com or (508) 320-5555.



Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society



Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are in need or are suffering, in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul. The Society meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the parish hall in Saint Mary Church. Please join us!

Call for Assistance:

If you need assistance, please call the help line for our parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society. They can offer information about the types of assistance available. Please call 508-212-4755 for help or more information.

Winter Storm Mass Policy



As we face the unpredictable New England winter season, I share our Winter Storm Mass Policy.

Sunday Mass

Should there be significant snowfall or extreme ice conditions on a weekend, especially if we have been warned or “encouraged” to stay off the roads, weekend Masses will be celebrated **ONLY** at Saint Mark Church. We will follow the usual Mass times, but all Masses will be moved to Stanley Street because (1) I live on that property and the Dominicans would not be driving from Providence to be with us, and (2) only one property will need to be plowed and shoveled in time for Mass. Please note: when we are told to stay off the roads because it is too dangerous to travel due to weather conditions, any Mass obligation does not hold. **STAY HOME** for your safety and the safety of others. The Lord certainly understands!

Daily Mass

When school is canceled or delayed due to winter weather, the daily Mass is also canceled. If the delay is on a Tuesday, we will have Mass on Tuesday afternoon. If there is an early dismissal of school due to winter weather on a Tuesday, the daily Mass on Tuesday afternoon is canceled.

I hope these directives are clear. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation. If you have any questions, please call the parish office.

Knights of Columbus Coat Drive: Thank You!



Thank you to all who donated to this year's drive! All donations will be given to the SVDP Clothing Center in Attleboro, which distributes clothing for free to those helped by our SVDP conferences here in North Attleborough and the surrounding communities. God bless you for your help.

Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group

RESPECT LIFE

Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Thursday, **January 4, 2024 at 6:30 pm in Sacred Heart Church's Library**. We hope to see you there!

Faith Formation Program 2023-2024

Director of Religious Education ~ Mrs. Elaine Corvese
508-695-3823; transfigurationreled@gmail.com

Faith Formation Office hours:

Monday – Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Class Schedule:

January 7th: **Grades 1 & 2**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

January 7th: **Grade 9**, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

January 8th: **Grade 7**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

January 21st: **Grades 1 & 2**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

January 21st: **Grade 9**, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

January 22nd: **Grade 8**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

January 29th: **Grade 5**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Please see website: saintmaryna.com for the 2023-2024 calendar for all grades. Faith Formation classes are held at Saint Mark Church hall in Attleboro Falls.

Cancellation of classes: In the event of cancellation of classes due to inclement weather, the Faith Formation Office will notify parents/guardians by email and the cancellation notice will also be on the answering machine of the Faith Formation office at 695-3823. Please note: if the North Attleboro School Department cancels school, Faith Formation classes are automatically canceled.

“Adopt-A-Family” ✨ An Advent Project



Please accept our sincere appreciation for your consistent generosity to the Adopt-A-Family project. Although many are struggling, so many families found ways to again be most generous to this effort. This year we provided for families who were especially in need of our collective love and support. Because of your unselfish assistance, we provided clothing for the children and parents. There were also books, games and the typical trappings of Christmas. In addition, we were able to provide assistance for utility bills and will be able to support some with assistance during the year. The St. Vincent de Paul Society of Transfiguration Parish provided enough food and goodies for all and delivered all the gifts just before Christmas. The success of this project is such an expression of love from all who sacrifice so that others may experience the wonderful magic that comes with this very blessed season of the year. May God Bless us all now and in the New Year.

Most gratefully, *Debbie Fitzgibbons and Betty Poirier*,
Adopt-A-Family Committee Members

SAINTS

SAINT MARY-SACRED HEART

Success Stories of SMSH Grads!



(left to right) Dylan Capua - SMSH 2019/ Bishop Feehan 2023, Stephen Capua- SMSH 2015/ Bishop Feehan 2019/ Providence College 2023 and Ava Mitchell - SMSH 2019/ Bishop Feehan 2023

Make SMSH part of your story! Witness the inspiring journey of three exceptional graduates from Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School, as they pave the way for a bright future. Stephen Capua, SMSH '15, attended Bishop Feehan High School and graduated from Providence College as a finance major. After these cousins graduated from SMSH 2019 and Bishop Feehan High School 2023, they went on to top notch colleges. Dylan Capua is a freshman at Brown University studying as a biochemistry/pre-med major and cousin, Ava Mitchell, is majoring in biomedical engineering at the University of Connecticut. Learn more about these remarkable Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School graduates in The Anchor at: <https://www.anchornews.org/index.php/2023/07/06/four-of-top-ten-bishop-feehan-high-school-graduates-are-from-st-mary-sacred-heart-school/>. These success stories exemplify the invaluable impact of a Catholic education at SMSH.

We cordially invite you to explore more about our school during our **Open House on Sunday, January 21, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.** This event welcomes current SMSH families, as well as new and prospective families. We look forward to seeing you there!

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Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School Alumni:

Did you, your child, grandchild or other relative graduate from St. Mary's School, Sacred Heart School or Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School? If so, please go to the Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School website www.smshschool.com and under the Alumni tab fill in the form on reconnect with SMSH. We appreciate your support in this important part of our school's history!



CatholicTV: A SmaSHing Time

The cast of the Christmas Pageant - members of the 3rd grade class - and Fr. Dave's choir performed in the Catholic TV studio this week. We thank Bishop Reed for this amazing opportunity and awesome experience.



The video is up, on-demand at the CatholicTV website, and also on the CatholicTV smart phone apps: <https://www.catholicTV.org/christmas/that-night-in-bethlehem.html>.

The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among the people,
To make music in the heart.

By Howard Thurman

Baptism Congratulations

Our prayerful best wishes are extended to four of our infants and their families who recently celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism. Please welcome and remember:

Fionn Trevor Comerford



Child of Aidan & Chloe (Sigamoney) Comerford
Godchild of Cole Firth & Delaney Tivnan

Olive Grace Fitton



Child of Jeremy L. & Hannah M. (Getty) Fitton
Godchild of Aaron LaBossiere & Lily A. Getty

Jameson Jarrett Mooney



Child of Jarrett & Elizabeth (Clarner) Mooney
Godchild of Kyle Cornetta & Megan Cornetta

Finley Eileen Tainsh



Child of Eric & Brenna Tainsh
Godchild of Shawn Dufficy & Deana Dufficy

Baptismal Preparation Classes Have Resumed



Parents requesting the baptism of their child should be registered members of the parish who attend weekend Mass here at Transfiguration of the Lord Parish on a weekly basis. Please pick up and complete one of the Parish Census forms if you have not already registered with the parish. If this is your first Baptism here at Transfiguration Parish, parents are asked to attend a brief baptismal preparation session. The next session will be held on Sunday, **January 14 at 12:30 pm** in the Sacred Heart Meeting Room. Advanced registration is required. Please call Martha at the parish office or email at stmaryna@noozi.com for more information.

Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting

Council #330 of the Knights of Columbus has been serving the Catholic Community of North Attleborough for 125 years. The Knights meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm, in the St. Mary Church Hall. Please drop by on meeting nights if you'd like to learn more about the Knights. Council #330 is committed to assisting local charities that align with the values of our Faith such as the Parish, the Parish school, and Abundant Hope. Contact Jim Schromm with any questions: jim.schromm@verizon.net.

January 15: Pax Christi Event

The Pax Christi local group that meets at LaSalette Shrine will host an Interfaith Prayer Service for Global Peace on Martin Luther King Day, Monday, January 15th, 2024, at 11:00 am at The National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette, 947 Park St. in Attleboro MA. In this reflective service, we will come together to pray for peace and harmony in our fragile world. All are welcome to participate. For more information, email leawoodstar@yahoo.com.



This
Christmas
end a quarrel.
Seek out a forgotten
friend. Dismiss suspicion,
and replace it with trust.
Write a love letter. Share some
treasure. Give a soft answer. Keep
a promise. Find the time. Forgo a grudge.
Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologize if you
were wrong. Try to understand. Examine your
demands on others. Think first of someone else.
Be kind; be gentle. Appreciate. Laugh a little. Laugh a
little more. Express your gratitude. Gladden the heart of a
child. Welcome a stranger. Take pleasure in the beauty and the
wonder of Earth.
Speak your love.
Speak it again.
Speak it yet
Once again.

lessonslearnedinlife.com

The Feast of the Holy Family - December 31, 2023



First Reading

A reading from the Book of Genesis

The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying: "Fear not, Abram! I am your shield; I will make your reward very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what good will your gifts be, if I keep on being childless and have as my heir the steward of my house, Eliezer?" Abram continued, "See, you have given me no offspring, and so one of my servants will be my heir." Then the word of the LORD came to him: "No, that one shall not be your heir; your own issue shall be your heir." The Lord took Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so," he added, "shall your descendants be." Abram put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.

The LORD took note of Sarah as he had said he would; he did for her as he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time that God had stated. Abraham gave the name Isaac to this son of his whom Sarah bore him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm

R. The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Give thanks to the LORD, invoke his name;
make known among the nations his deeds.
Sing to him, sing his praise,
proclaim all his wondrous deeds.

R. The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Glory in his holy name;
rejoice, O hearts that seek the LORD!
Look to the LORD in his strength;
constantly seek his face.

R. The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

You descendants of Abraham, his servants,
sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!
He, the LORD, is our God;
throughout the earth his judgments prevail.

R. The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

He remembers forever his covenant
which he made binding for a thousand generations
which he entered into with Abraham
and by his oath to Isaac.

R. The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he received power to generate, even though he was past the normal age--and Sarah herself was sterile--for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy. So it was that there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name." He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets;
in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son.*

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

† A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
Glory to you, O Lord.

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, *Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord*, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, He took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted—and you yourself a sword will pierce—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Family Ties:

The Christmas season always offers us an oversupply of achingly beautiful advertisements and television shows of perfect families with their perfect pets gathered in perfect homes with perfect snow falling through windless skies. But for most families surrounded by children on vacation from school, family may be too much with us! Against all the prettied-up family films, we fail. Thank God we are not called to be a perfect people. We are called rather to be a compassionate people. This ties us all together.

Comment:

In Luke's Gospel today we learn how much Mary and Joseph resemble new parents. They attempt to carry out faithfully the responsibilities of their religion. They go to the temple to fulfill the observance of the law of Israel. Here they meet saintly Anna and Simeon, both of whom give us a glimpse into Luke's intent. These two people seem to embody the mature wisdom of the entire people of Israel. In this wonderful and holy family, they see the fulfillment of Israel's vocation.

Because we know the Gospels, we know that Anna and Simeon were given the hard job of prophecy. But it is possible for young parents to be filled with dreams and hopes and therefore miss the full import of the prophecy, which in any case they could hardly be expected to fathom. So, Mary and Joseph returned home with their tiny child and did what parents always do. They cared for, supported, loved, and cherished their child. They did this knowing all the while, as all parents do, that the future is not theirs to control.

Reflection:

What is in families' control is the grace and task of imparting and embodying the faith of which Paul speaks in the second reading. What is in their control are the courtesies and respect that should exist between and among the generations. Much is learned by osmosis. Families learn as they go along. Family members start out as novices. Strong families are amateurs who never cease growing and learning. Members sometimes do the right thing and sometimes the wrong thing. Members sometimes know what to do and sometimes they don't. Members sometimes amaze each other and sometimes they fail terribly.

After all is said and done, family members do what they do for the love of the doing. In the sacrament of marriage, love is assumed, and faithfulness is promised. The rest is worked out in the living out of love and faith. The family that is underfoot is exactly the family we need. It has everything necessary to be a genuine holy family. The season of Christmas does remind us of this enduring gift of family. Continue Christmas by celebrating with your family. Parents might consider writing a note to their children letting them know how much they cherish them. Children might get together and plan a simple, inexpensive way to say thanks to parents. These simple gifts remind us of what is so easy to forget or take for granted - that family, such as it is, remains an irreplaceable gift.

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Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, December 31, 2023



Invest time each week to
expand your vocabulary and
deepen your faith.

31 December 2023

WORD OF THE WEEK

Vocation \vō-ˈkā-shən\

A summons or strong drive to a particular course of action, career, or occupation; a divine call to consecrated life or diocesan holy orders.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-vocation>

CONTEXT

Many people mistake our work for our **vocation**. Our **vocation** is the love of Jesus. —*Mother Teresa*

No **vocation** is born of itself or lives for itself. A **vocation** flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people. —*Pope Francis*

Everybody, no matter what **vocation** they're looking at, should add music as an essential to their curriculum. Music can be a very important part of your soul and your growth as a human being. It's so powerful. —*Quincy Jones*

WHY IT MATTERS

Each of us, through our Baptism, is called by God to follow the path of love. Our unique and particular response is our **vocation**. The church generally refers to four types of **vocations**: marriage, single life, holy orders, and religious life. It is up to each of us to discern the **vocation** that will give us the greatest sense of fulfillment and joy and lead us to holiness.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: The Beatitudes express the **vocation** of the faithful and shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life (1717).

RELATED WORDS

Discipleship | Charism | Consecrated Life

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Vocation: Does everyone have one?

Vocation is one of those words that tends to elicit a host of questions. What does it mean that God "calls" us? Does God

plan our lives? Is free will a polite fiction, when God has our destiny all worked out in advance? The short answers are: Our freedom is real, human history has no blueprint, and God is prepared to greet any choice we might make with a constellation of grace and possibility. So feel—really and seriously—free.

Yet we say God calls us. To what, if not to particular things? God calls us to fullness of life. God wants you to be everything you can be, to the height and breadth and depth of your being. God wants you to be fully alive, which means loving, giving, expressing, and radiant—just as God is. We're made in the image and likeness of God. So answer that call, and you have stepped into your vocation for sure.

—*Alice Camille*

From *Questions Catholics Ask* <https://tinyurl.com/QCA-vocation>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD (JANUARY 1)

Bring Christ to bear

We begin the new year in the glow of the Christmas season of new life. Our focus today, however, is not so much on the child Jesus in the manger but on his mother, Mary. We bring to mind and heart the woman who said yes: Yes to being the Mother of God. Yes to becoming a vehicle for God to become incarnate in the world. It is fitting to honor Mary and walk with her as we enter resolutely into the new year.

READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010124.cfm>). "The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!"

FAITH IN ACTION

How does God call us to be bearers of Christ? We can start with offering Christ and all others the fullness of our love.



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