

ST. MARY PARISH

518 South 2nd Street; PO Box 847; Guttenberg, Iowa 52052

Newsletter: Dec 21, 2022 ~ Rectory: 563-252-1247 ~ Fr.'s Cell: 563-258-3958 ~ www.maryicjoseph.org

LIVE THE LITURGY Inspiration for the week: **Christmas is Joy!**

Merry Christmas!



Today we rejoice in God's overwhelming love for us, expressed through his Son Jesus. In our Christmas Day Gospel, John writes, "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth."

The Advent Gospels have helped us prepare for this day! We have been encouraged through the words of the prophets, John the Baptist, and the angel Gabriel, who said – "Do not be afraid." God knows that we yearn to be free, and thus sends Christ into our midst. Through Christ we are once again invited into the "fulness of life" – where hope and joy are realities, not dreams.

Pope Francis tell us: "Christmas is joy."

What is the joy of Christmas? It is the joy of our encounter with Jesus Christ! There is plenty of manufactured joy that is fleeting, especially during the Christmas season. The joy that we experience in the love of Christ, though, is eternal. It is not simply happiness in a thing or a moment.

Our joy is the Good News of salvation in Christ, the Incarnate One, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Look at a scene of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. In that humble moment, God comes as an infant child for one reason and one reason only, for us to have the opportunity for salvation. ~Catholic Apostolate Center

A Christmas Gift: a book by Matthew Kelly, "**HOLY MOMENTS**", will be available **FREE** for you to take home and read. It is called, "A Handbook for the Rest of Your Life." This book is promoted through St. Mary's Parish Life Committee

Start the New Year off right . . . Register now for the

2023 Archdiocesan Women's Conference, Beauty in Christ: Fiat! Saying Yes to God!

Saturday, January 28, 2023, 8:00 - 2:00
Brinkmann Hall, St. Mary Church

Dynamic speakers, Marcia Lane-McGee and Jamie Rathjen, will share their fiats to God – in extraordinary and ordinary ways! You'll be inspired to embrace God's call for you! This conference, attended virtually at St. Mary, offers prayer with the Archbishop, speakers, great conversation, music, and more! Cost is \$25- includes ticket, continental breakfast, and lunch. To register contact Katey Simon by Friday, January 20 by leaving a message at (563) 252-1577 or emailing at dbq096ym@dbqarch.org. Invite your mother, daughters, aunts, sisters and friends and be ready to say **YES!**

Mass Schedule: December 26 – January 1, 2023

Mon., Dec 26: [No Mass Scheduled], "St. Stephen"

Tues., Dec 27: [No Mass Scheduled], "St. John – Apostle"

Wed., Dec. 28: 8:30 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg, "Holy Infants"
For those battling cancer & other health issues in our 3-linked parishes

Thur., Dec 29: [No Mass Scheduled]

Fri., Dec 30: [No Mass Scheduled]
"Feast of the Holy Family – Jesus, Mary & Joseph"

Sat., Dec 31: Vigil of Solemnity Of Mary, Mother of God
4:00 P.M.—St. Joseph, Garnavillo,
Leon Berns & Inez Hoeger (C.D. of A.)
5:30 P.M.—St. Mary, Guttenberg
Merlin & Adele Block & Arlene Handke

Sun., Jan 1: Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God
8:30 A.M. – Immaculate Conception, N. Buena Vista
People of the Parish
10:00 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg, Mass, Live Streamed
Rita McGuire

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR: Many thanks for your Christmas cards and gifts to your pastor. May God bless all of you in the new year of 2023 A.D.

GOSPEL REFLECTION: Pondering the Birth of Christ

So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. [Luke 2:16-19](#)

Merry Christmas! Our Advent preparations have been completed, and we are now invited by our Lord to enter into the glorious celebration of His birth!

How well do you understand the awe-inspiring mystery of Christmas? How fully do you comprehend the significance of God becoming a human, born of a virgin? Though many are quite familiar with the beautiful and humble story of the birth of the Savior of the World, that familiarity can have the surprising negative effect of keeping our intellect from deeply probing the depths of the meaning of what we celebrate.

Notice the last line of the Gospel passage quoted above: “And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” What a beautiful line to ponder this Christmas day. Mother Mary was the one person who would have understood the mystery of the birth of her Son, the Son of God, the Savior of the World, far more deeply than anyone else. It was to her that the Archangel Gabriel appeared, announcing her pregnancy and His birth. It was her who carried her Son, the Son of God, in her Immaculate womb for nine months. It was to her that Elizabeth, her cousin, cried out, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” ([Luke 1:42](#)). It was Mary who was the Immaculate Conception, the one who was preserved from all sin throughout her life. And it was her who gave birth to this Child, carried Him in her arms and nursed Him at her breast. Our Blessed Mother, more than any other, understood the incredible event that had taken place in her life.

But, again, the Gospel above says that “Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” One thing this tells us is that even Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of God, needed time to ponder, reflect and savor this most holy mystery. She never doubted, but her faith continually deepened, and her heart pondered the unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation.

Another thing this tells us is that there is no end to the depth of the “pondering” to which we must commit ourselves if we want to enter more deeply into the mystery of the birth of the Son of God. Reading the story, setting up a nativity scene, sharing Christmas cards, attending Mass and the like are central to a holy celebration of Christmas. But “pondering” and “reflecting,” especially during prayer and especially at the Christmas Mass, will have the effect of drawing us ever deeper into this Mystery of our Faith.

Reflect, today, with our Blessed Mother. Ponder the Incarnation. Place yourself into the scene that first Christmas. Hear the sounds of the town. Smell the smells of the stable. Watch as the shepherds come forth in adoration. And enter the mystery more fully, acknowledging that the more you know about the mystery of Christmas, the more you know how little you actually know and understand. But that humble realization is the first step to a deeper understanding of what we celebrate this day.

Lord, I gaze at the wonder of Your birth. You Who are God, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, God from God and Light from Light, became one of us, a humble child, born of a virgin and laid in a manger. Help me to ponder this glorious event, to reflect upon the mystery with awe and to more fully grasp the meaning of what You have done for us. I thank You, dear Lord, for this glorious celebration of Your birth into the world. Jesus, I trust in You. source: mycatholic.life

Teens Encounter Christ, or TEC, is a Catholic experience designed for high school juniors and seniors taking place January 14th- January 16th at Beckman High School. Cost is only \$5! Registration is due by December 30th. Please contact Katey Simon at youthministry@smic.pvt.k12.ia.us for more info.

A Stewardship Moment

For unto us is born this day a Savior! In response to so great a love, only the gift of my whole self will do. You have given us Yourself, dear Lord; in love and thanksgiving, I commit myself afresh to You.

Upcoming Parish Events

Jan 4: Faith Formation/Youth Ministry, 6 and 6:15pm
Jan 8: KC Breakfast, 8-11:30am
Jan 11: Faith Formation/Youth Ministry, 6 and 6:15pm
Jan 14-16: TEC at Beckman High School
Jan 22: Movie presented by Parish Life
Jan 28: Beauty in Christ Women’s Conference, 8-1:30

Update on the 2023 Budget Envelopes: the printing company has contacted us indicating their printer broke and they are having a hard time getting parts. It may be end of January or February before parts are received. Until the budget boxes are available, please place your contribution in a regular envelope with your name on it. Alternatively, you may wish to consider online giving <https://maryicjoseph.weshareonline.org/>

Please email OfficeOfStMary@gmail.com if you no longer need a budget box due to online giving or you simply use your own envelope. **Reminder:** The Internal Revenue Service requires all contributions be **contributed/postmarked by Dec. 31, 2022** to receive charitable credit for 2022.