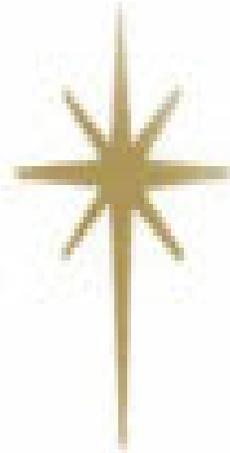


St. Mary's Church

*The Wise
Still Seek Him*



January 3, 2021

The Epiphany of the Lord

PO Box 456

Minooka, IL 60447

www.stmarysminooka.com

FROM FR. TUAN

Dear Parishioners,

Pope Francis delivered this homily about the Feast of the Epiphany :

Epiphany: this word indicates the *manifestation* of the Lord, who, as Saint Paul tells us in the second reading (cf. *Eph 3:6*), makes himself known to all the nations, today represented by the Magi. In this way, we see revealed the glory of a God who has come for everyone: every nation, language and people is welcomed and loved by him. It is symbolized by the light, which penetrates and illumines all things.

Yet if our God makes himself known for everyone, it is even more surprising *how* he does so. The Gospel speaks of a hum of activity around the palace of King Herod once Jesus appears as a king. The Magi ask: "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?" (*Mt 2:2*). They will find him, but not where they thought: not in the royal palace of Jerusalem, but in a humble abode in Bethlehem. We saw this same paradox at Christmas. The Gospel spoke of the census of the entire world taken in the days of the Emperor Augustus, when Quirinius was governor (cf. *Lk 2:2*). But none of the great men of that time realized that the King of history was being born in their own time. Again, when Jesus, some thirty years of age, made himself known publicly, preceded by John the Baptist, the Gospel once more solemnly situates the event, listing all the "magnates" of the time, the great secular and spiritual powers: Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. And it concludes by saying that, at that time, "the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness" (*Lk 3:2*). To none of the magnates, but to a man who had withdrawn to the desert. Here is the surprise: God does not need the spotlights of the world to make himself known.

When we listen to that list of distinguished personages, we might be tempted to turn the spotlight on them. We might think that it would have been better had the star of Jesus appeared in Rome, on the Palatine Hill, where Augustus ruled over the world; then the whole empire would immediately have become Christian. Or if it had shone on the palace of Herod, he might have done good rather than evil. But God's light does not shine on those who shine with their own light. God "proposes" himself; he does not "impose" himself. He illumines; he does not blind. It is always very tempting to confuse God's light with the lights of the world. How many times have we pursued the seductive lights of power and celebrity, convinced that we are rendering good service to the Gospel! But by doing so, have we not turned the spotlight on the wrong place, because God was not there. His kindly light shines forth in humble love. How many times too, have we, as a Church, attempted to shine with our own light! Yet we are not the *sun* of humanity. We are the *moon* that, despite its shadows, reflects the true light, which is the Lord. He is the light of the world (cf. *Jn 9:5*). Him, not us.

The light of God shines on those who receive it. Isaiah, in the first reading (cf. *60:2*), tells us that that light does not prevent the darkness and the thick clouds from covering the earth, but shines forth on those prepared to accept it. And so, the prophet addresses a challenging summons to everyone: "Arise, shine" (*60:1*). We need to *arise*, to get up from our sedentary lives and prepare for a journey. Otherwise, we stand still, like the scribes that Herod consulted; they knew very well where the Messiah was born, but they did not move. We also need to *shine*, to be clothed in God who is light, day by day, until we are fully clothed in Jesus. Yet to be clothed in God, who like the light is simple, we must first put aside our pretentious robes. Otherwise, we will be like Herod, who preferred the earthly lights of success and power to the divine light. The Magi, instead, fulfill the prophecy. They arise and shine, and are clothed in light. They alone see the star in the heavens: not the scribes, nor Herod, nor any of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

In order to find Jesus, we also need to take a different route, to follow a different path, his path, the path of humble love. And we have to persevere. Today's Gospel ends by saying that the Magi, after encountering Jesus, "left for their own country *by another road*" (Mt 2:12). Another road, different from that of Herod. An alternative route than that of the world, like the road taken by those who surround Jesus at Christmas: Mary and Joseph, the shepherds. Like the Magi, they left home and became pilgrims on the paths of God. For only those who leave behind their worldly attachments and undertake a journey find the mystery of God.

This holds true for us too. It is not enough to know *where* Jesus was born, as the scribes did, if we do not go there. It is not enough to know *that* Jesus was born, like Herod, if we do not encounter him. When his place becomes our place, when his time becomes our time, when his person becomes our life, then the prophecies come to fulfilment in us. Then Jesus is born within us. He becomes *the living God for me*. Today we are asked to imitate the Magi. They do not debate; they set out. They do not stop to look, but enter the house of Jesus. They do not put themselves at the centre, but bow down before the One who *is* the centre. They do not remain glued to their plans, but are prepared to take other routes. Their actions reveal a close contact with the Lord, a radical openness to him, a total engagement with him. With him, they use the language of love, the same language that Jesus, though an infant, already speaks. Indeed, the Magi go to the Lord not to receive, but to give. Let us ask ourselves this question: at Christmas did we bring gifts to Jesus for his party, or did we only exchange gifts among ourselves?

If we went to the Lord empty-handed, today we can remedy that. The Gospel, in some sense, gives us a little "gift list": gold, frankincense and myrrh. *Gold*, the most precious of metals, reminds us God has to be granted first place; he has to be worshiped. But do that, we need to remove ourselves from the first place and to recognize our neediness, the fact that we are not self-sufficient. Then there is *frankincense*, which symbolizes a relationship with the Lord, prayer, which like incense rises up to God (cf. *Ps* 141:2). Just as incense must burn in order to yield its fragrance, so too, in prayer, we need to "burn" a little of our time, to spend it with the Lord. Not just in words, but also by our actions. We see this in the *myrrh*, the ointment that would be lovingly used to wrap the body of Jesus taken down from the cross (cf. *Jn* 19:39). The Lord is pleased when we care for bodies racked by suffering, the flesh of the vulnerable, of those left behind, of those who can only receive without being able to give anything material in return. Precious in the eyes of God is mercy shown to those who have nothing to give back. Gratuitousness!

In this Christmas season now drawing to its close, let us not miss the opportunity to offer a precious gift to our King, who came to us not in worldly pomp, but in the luminous poverty of Bethlehem. If we can do this, his light will shine upon us.

Love and Prayers,



Fr. Tuan



Welcome to St. Mary's Church!

Would you like to become a
Registered Parishioner?

We are so blessed to have you with us today and every day! Our liturgies are made better by your presence and participation. We hope that you find the experience here at St. Mary's to be a warm and inspiring experience of the Eucharist and the faith that we profess. If you are not registered and would like to be, please fill out the form below and mail it to the Parish office at P.O. Box 456 Minooka, IL 60447.



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Thank you!

* If you have moved, changed your email address or phone number please let us know!

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Kaleigh.stmarysmusic@gmail.com

MASSES

Weekend Masses:

Saturday: 5:00pm
Sunday: 7:30am,9:00am & 11:00am
Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri - 8:30am
Wed-8:30am-Com. Service

Weekday Mass

Confession -

**Saturday 4:00pm-4:30pm in the
Parish Center**

Parish Rectory office

Monday - Thursday 8am-4pm
Friday- 8:00am- 12:00pm

Rectory Phone - 815-467-2233 Fax Number -815-467-1760
Website: stmarysminooka.com
Facebook: St. Mary's Minooka

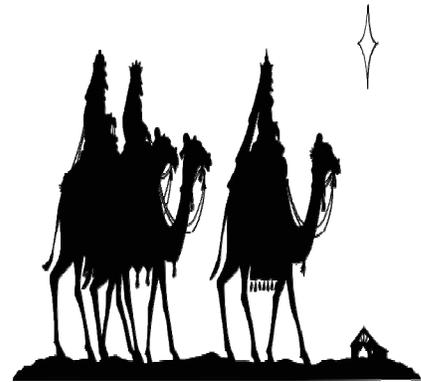


St. Mary's Commissions

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Christmas Giving Tree- Kathy Williamson (815) 941-4419	Mom's of St. Mary's stmarysminooka@sbcglobal.net	Worship Commission- Chris Gregory cslkgreg@msm.com
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		ProLife- Kathy Glover (815) 467-2233

Mass Intentions

Sat. Jan 2	5:00pm	Parishioners
Sun. Jan 3	7:30am	Mitzi Haley
	9:00am	Fr. Peter Jarosz
	11:00am	Sr. Rosemary Small
Mon. Jan 4	8:30am	Fr. Tuan's Parents
Tues. Jan 5	8:30am	Souls in purgatory
Wed. Jan 6	8:30am	Communion Service
Thurs. Jan 7	8:30am	Sr. Rosemary Small
Fri. Jan 8	8:30am	Fr. Mark Fracaro
Sat. Jan 9	5:00pm	Parishioners
Sun. Jan 10	7:30am	Marianne Keehl
	9:00am	Police and Firefighters
	11:00am	Fr. Tuan's brothers



LIGHT A CANDLE

This Week candles were lit for :

Police & Firefighters

An end to the Corona Virus

Pat & Mickey McDonald & John Brown

If you would like to have a candle lit in the candle area near the Virgin Mary Statue outside, for a special intention, please call the rectory at 815-467-2233.

Please pray for

Ann Tyrell
Jim Homa
Thomas McDonald
Denise Tonarelli
Kimberly Gaydula
Dylan Pickett
Sandra Severson
Paul Thien phu
Kevin McEvelly
Nichole Reisberg
Pam Baumgarter
Taryn Schrader
Madeline Jandjeska

Dominic Boblak
Robyn Bumgarner
Perez Family
Brody Roberts
Don Ruettiger
Deidra Hogan
Al Soley
Bill Stafford
Judy Stafford
Fr. Jim Lennon
Peter Lehner
Jerry & Lorraine
Davidson
Kay Miller
Catherine Dunbar



Religious Education

Good Morning RE Families!!

We hope you had a wonderful Christmas and a blessed New Year Holiday!!

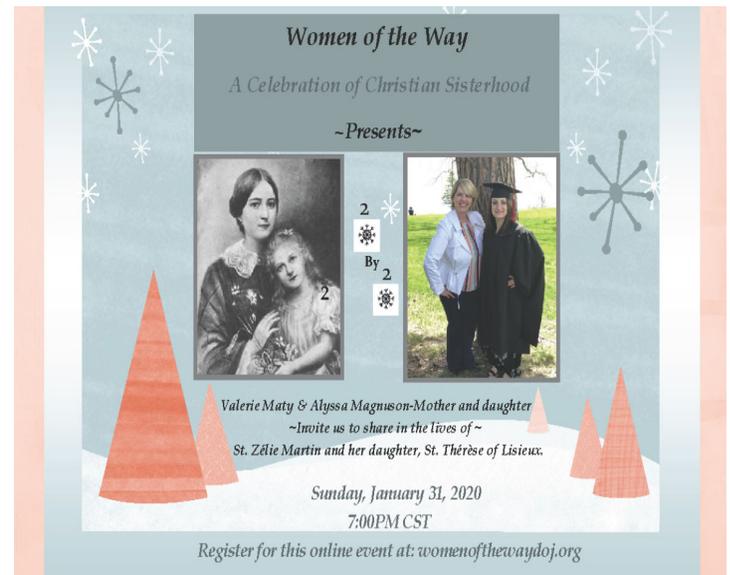
Our Schedule for the months of Jan. and Feb. is:

Wed. Jan. 13th -return to RE
Wed. Jan. 20th
Wed. Jan. 27th
Wed. Feb. 3rd
Wed. Feb. 10th
Wed. Feb. 17th - Ash Wednesday
Wed. Feb. 24th.

Looking forward to seeing everyone back on Jan. 13th!!

God Bless,

Deacon Fred Ban
Director of Faith Formation
St. Mary's Minooka



SAINT OF THE WEEK

This American saint was born in [Bohemia](#) in 1811. He was looking forward to being ordained in 1835 when the [bishop](#) decided there would be no more ordinations. It is difficult for us to imagine now, but [Bohemia](#) was overstocked with priests. [John](#) wrote to [bishops](#) all over [Europe](#) but the story was the same everywhere no one wanted any more priests. [John](#) was sure he was called to be a [priest](#) but all the doors to follow that vocation seemed to close in his face.

But [John](#) didn't give up. He had learned English by working in a factory with English-speaking workers so he wrote to the [bishops](#) in America. Finally, the [bishop](#) in New York agreed to ordain him. In order to follow God's call to the [priesthood](#) [John](#) would have to leave his home forever and travel across the ocean to a new and rugged land.

In New York, [John](#) was one of 36 priests for 200,000 Catholics. John's [parish](#) in western New York stretched from Lake [Ontario](#) to Pennsylvania. His church had no steeple or floor but that didn't [matter](#) because [John](#) spent most of his [time](#) traveling from village to village, climbing mountains to visit the sick, staying in garrets and taverns to teach, and celebrating the [Mass](#) at kitchen tables.

Because of the work and the isolation of his parish, [John](#) longed for community and so joined the Redemptorists, a congregation of priests and brothers dedicated to helping the poor and most abandoned.

John was appointed [bishop](#) of Philadelphia in 1852. As bishop, he was the first to organize a diocesan [Catholic](#) school system. A founder of [Catholic education](#) in this country, he increased the number of [Catholic schools](#) in his [diocese](#) from two to 100.

John never lost his love and concern for the people -- something that may have bothered the elite of Philadelphia. On one visit to a rural parish, the [parish priest](#) picked him up in a manure wagon. Seated on a plank stretched over the wagon's contents, [John](#) joked, "Have you ever seen suc

The ability to learn languages that had brought him to [America](#) led him to learn Spanish, French, Italian, and Dutch so he could hear confessions in at least six languages. When Irish immigration started, he learned Gaelic so well that one Irish [woman](#) remarked, "Isn't it grand that we have an Irish bishop!". h an entourage for a bishop!"

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Q. If someone who believes in God but is not baptized and passes away, do they go to hell? A. This is an interesting question which requires some nuances to make the answer clear.

These questions can only be understood if we understand the perfect love and wisdom of God in all things. God is not legalistic. He does not look at a child who dies and say, “well, sorry but I only take baptized children into Heaven.” This would be contrary to the infinite mercy and wisdom of God. At the same time, the Church teaches that Baptism is the only way we know of that leads to salvation. Therefore, it is necessary. So how do we reconcile these views that appear to be opposed? That is, how do we reconcile a loving God with the idea that Baptism is necessary for salvation?

This is done quite easily. We believe that Baptism is the only way we know of (the only way God revealed to us) to receive the grace of salvation. But God, in His infinite love and wisdom is not limited by the limited revelation He shared with us. God can do whatever He wants to do. Therefore, if a child dies before Baptism, the parents should rest assured that God loves that child far more than they do. And this perfectly loving God will act in a way that is perfectly loving toward that child. One speculation is that God offers that child the same choice He offered the angels. They had a onetime opportunity to choose. So it is entirely possible that when this child dies and faces God, this child will be invited to choose to love God freely and, thus, spend eternity with God. But we must always remember that Heaven does require a free choice. Therefore, not even a child would be forced to be there against his or her will.

Another interesting scenario is the adult who is not baptized. What happens when that adult dies? Again, we must look at this from the point of view of a God who is infinitely wise and infinitely loving.

In this case there are a few possibilities. The first possibility is what is referred to as the “baptism by blood.” This would be the person who desires Baptism but, before actually receiving this sacrament, is martyred for their faith. We don’t see this that often today but it was a real situation in the early Church. We believe that this desire to be baptized, as well as the act of martyrdom, provides the grace of Baptism and thus the person

Lastly, we need to look at the situation of those who did not choose to be baptized and, therefore, die without this sacrament. These cases will fall in one of two categories. First, there are those who through no fault of their own do not come to an explicit faith in Christ and, as a result, do not seek Baptism. In this case God will judge only the heart. There are many reasons why a person may not come to faith in Christ explicitly through no fault of their own. Say, for example, that a person lives in some culture where the Gospel has never been preached and they actually never heard of Jesus. Does God consider them to be guilty of eternal damnation because they never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus? Certainly not.



Thank you for your Financial Support

We are grateful for the generous support that you give to St. Mary's parish through your weekly contributions. Have you considered providing for the continuation of that support by including the parish in your Will? Bequests given to the parish through Wills are for the sole use of St. Mary's Parish. To include the parish in your Will the correct language is "I give (a percentage or amount) to St. Mary's Parish, Minooka, IL". Thank you for giving consideration to leaving a legacy!



**St. Mary's
Book club**



Our next selection is "Someone Like You" by Karen Kingsbury. A stranger informs a 22 yr old woman that her parents are not her biological parents. She does not believe this but tells her parents about the incident. They admit that it is true, and that they had intended to tell her much sooner, but could never find the right time. This novel is about decisions and choices, both good and not so good, that have a far reaching effect on many people

Please plan on joining us in our "Zoom meeting" discussion on Tuesday, Jan 19th, at 6:30 p.m. Copies of the book are available at the Minooka Public Library. Both in person and curbside pick up are available. Call the library (815-467-1600) or Mary(815-467-9577) for details. Please have your library card available when you pick up. All are welcome!

Questions? Please call Mary Kimble at 815-467-9577.



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Be Kind and Merciful"*

*Thank you for your financial support to
the good works of our Diocese.*

Please continue to make your 2020 pledge payments. Once we have reached our goal in paid pledges, 70% of the additional funds received will be returned to the parish for our use.

**2020
CATHOLIC MINISTRIES
ANNUAL APPEAL
PLEDGE REPORT**

12/20/2020

Parish Goal:	\$40,200.00
Amount Pledged:	\$46,049.00
Balance Due:	\$ 1,430.00
Donor Count	200

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Mary Blatti- bulletin editor

SOFTWARE —

PRINTER —

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