

# THE CENTRAL EXPRESS

Quarterly Newsletter and Ramblings from....



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY PARISH, MT. VERNON  
ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY PARISH, CENTRALIA  
ST. LAWRENCE PARISH, SANDOVAL

CELEBRATING OUR MARION AND JEFFERSON COUNTY FAITH COMMUNITY



December 2023

VOLUME II ISSUE III



Dear Parishioners and Friends,

As the gentle chills of December creep in and the world adorns itself with festive colors and twinkling lights, the heart of every Catholic is stirred with anticipation – for Advent is upon us. This sacred season is more than just a countdown to Christmas; it is a profound period of spiritual preparation, introspection, and eager expectation. It reminds us of the imminent arrival of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The very essence of Advent is preparation. It symbolizes the long centuries of waiting for the Savior, the Messiah, before His birth in Bethlehem. Today, it calls upon us to be vigilant and prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of Christ's birth and His eventual return. We are invited to engage in spiritual exercises like fasting, reading Scripture, and participating in special liturgical rites. Lighting the Advent wreath each week, we journey from prophecy to fulfillment, darkness to light. The candles, slowly illuminating our homes, mirror the enlightenment of our souls as we approach the joy of Christmas.

While the world outside celebrates with gifts and feasts, the true essence of Christmas for Catholics is found in the hallowed halls of our churches – at the Mass. The Christmas Mass isn't just a tradition; it's a profound act of worship and thanksgiving for God's greatest gift to humanity: His only Son. By attending Christmas Mass, we come together as a community of believers to commemorate the birth of Christ. The music, the readings, the Eucharist – everything about the Mass on this special day deepens our understanding of God's boundless love for us. It's a celebration that transcends the material and touches the divine.

If you've been distant from the church, let this Christmas be a homecoming. Our doors are always open, and the warm embrace of the congregation awaits. The spirit of Christmas is one of giving, reflecting God's own generosity. While we exchange gifts with loved ones, it's essential to remember our spiritual home – our parish. Supporting the parish at Christmas isn't just about financial contributions, though they are always appreciated and put to good use. It's about giving your time, talent, and prayers. Volunteering for church activities, singing in the choir, helping with the liturgy, or simply praying for the well-being of the parish and its members are all acts of immense value. However, if you are blessed with means, consider making a special Christmas offering. These funds go a long way in maintaining the church, keeping our school growing and prosperous and reaching out to those in need.

Advent is a journey of the heart, and Christmas, its glorious destination. As we navigate this sacred path, let us embrace the spirit of preparation, participate wholeheartedly in the Christmas Mass, and give generously to our beloved parish. May the joy, peace, and love of this holy season fill your hearts, homes, and communities. Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year! **Blessings and Peace! Fr. Steve**



As the pastor of St. Mary's, it is with a heart full of joy that I extend to you an open invitation to join us in the celebration of the most wondrous event in history—the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I recognize the journey of faith is not without its stumbles and trials. If you find yourself distant or disconnected from the Church, know that you are not alone, and you are always part of our family. Christmas is a perfect time to renew ties, to find solace in the companionship of fellow believers, and to be reminded of the infinite love that came down to us one holy night in Bethlehem.

Let us come together to form a family of love and caring this Christmas. Our doors are open wide.

**Our schedule of services are:**

- **Christmas Eve Vigil:**  
December 24th, 6:00 PM
- **Midnight Mass:**  
December 24th, 12:00 AM
- **Christmas Day Mass:**  
December 25th, 9:00 AM

No matter how long you've been away, no matter the reason, this season is for you. Let the birth of Christ be a new birth in your heart as well. Allow the story of Jesus to be your story—a story of coming home.



Join us for an inspiring afternoon of Christmas caroling, hosted by The First Presbyterian Church, St. Mary

Church, and First United Methodist Church. We are delighted to invite you to this special event, to be held at the, **First United Methodist Church located at 103 S. Elm St, Centralia, on Sunday, December 17, 2023. The festivities will commence at 3:00 p.m.**

As we gather, our collective voices will rise in celebration of the festive season and to honor the Light of Christ. The program features a heart-warming selection of cherished Christmas carols, including "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," "Silent Night," and "O Holy Night," as well as various solo performances and instrumental pieces.

Everyone is welcome to attend this free event. Following the caroling, please feel free to join us in the Fellowship Room for a chance to mingle and enjoy some light refreshments.





Celebrating our First Mass back together for the 2023 - 24 School Year



Second Quarter Awards, Grades 5th - 8th



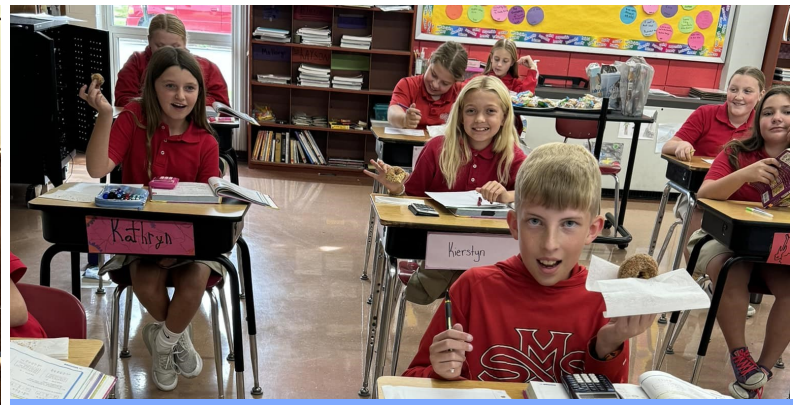
Second Quarter Awards, Grades 1st - 4th



Second Quarter Awards, Grades PreK - K



Blessing the newly installed 2023 - 2024, SMS, Student Council



Enjoying PaPa's Donuts a treat for the whole SMS Students and Faculty



Defenders/St. Mary Celebrating the Regional Win



Celebrating Sister Michael's Birthday with PreK-4





# ADVENT



HOPE. LOVE. JOY. PEACE.

**Challenge yourself on Advent and Christmas knowledge! How many of these questions can you answer correctly?**

## 1. The Word "Advent"

Question: What is the meaning of the word "Advent"?

- a) Birth
- b) Coming
- c) Departure
- d) Celebration

## 2. Duration

Question: How many weeks long is Advent?

- a) Two weeks
- b) Three weeks
- c) Four weeks
- d) Five weeks

## 3. Liturgical Colors

Question: Which colors are associated with the Advent season?

- a) Green and White
- b) Red and Gold
- c) Purple and Rose
- d) Blue and Silver

## 4. Gaudete Sunday

Question: On which Sunday of Advent is the rose candle lit?

- a) First
- b) Second
- c) Third
- d) Fourth

## 5. Symbolism

Question: What does the Advent wreath symbolize?

- a) The Star of Bethlehem
- b) The Holy Family
- c) The endlessness of God's love
- d) The gifts of the Magi

## 6. Scriptural Prophecies

Question: Which prophet is most frequently quoted during Advent for his prophecies about the coming Messiah?

- a) Jeremiah
- b) Daniel
- c) Micah
- d) Isaiah

## 7. "O Antiphons"

Question: When do the "O Antiphons" traditionally begin?

- a) December 1st
- b) December 10th
- c) December 17th
- d) December 24th

## 8. Immaculate Conception

Question: Which Marian feast is celebrated during Advent?

- a) Our Lady of Sorrows
- b) Assumption of Mary
- c) Immaculate Conception
- d) Our Lady of Fatima

## 9. Origin of Advent

Question: Where did the celebration of Advent first begin?

- a) Rome
- b) Jerusalem
- c) Spain
- d) Gaul

## 10. Focus of Advent

Question: What are the two main focuses of the Advent season?

- a) Repentance and Celebration
- b) Celebration and Gift-giving
- c) Jesus' birth and His second coming
- d) Nativity and Baptism of Jesus

## 11. Date of Christmas

Question: On which date is the birth of Jesus Christ celebrated?

- a) December 24
- b) December 25
- c) January 1
- d) January 6

## 12. Nativity Scene

Question: Who is credited with creating the first nativity scene in the 13th century?

- a) St. Dominic
- b) St. Augustine
- c) St. Benedict
- d) St. Francis of Assisi

## 13. Gifts of the Magi

Question: Which of the following was NOT one of the gifts given to Jesus by the Magi?

- a) Gold
- b) Frankincense
- c) Silver
- d) Myrrh

## 14. The Gospel Story

Question: In which Gospel is the birth of Jesus detailed with shepherds and angels?

- a) Matthew
- b) Mark
- c) Luke
- d) John

## 15. The Star of Bethlehem

Question: Which group of individuals followed the Star of Bethlehem to find Jesus?

- a) Shepherds
- b) Priests
- c) Magi (or Wise Men)
- d) Prophets

## 16. Mary's Song of Praise

Question: What is the name of the song of praise that Mary recites during her visit to Elizabeth?

- a) Doxology
- b) Kyrie
- c) Gloria
- d) Magnificat

## 17.

### Christmas Proclamation

Question: In the Midnight Mass liturgy for Christmas, there's a chanted proclamation announcing Jesus' birth and dating it from various epochs. What's it known as?

- a) The Gloria
- b) The Te Deum
- c) The Kalenda
- d) The Lauds

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ FOUND ON THE NEXT PAGE

## ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

- 1) Coming
- 2) Four weeks
- 3) Purple and Rose
- 4) Third
- 5) The endlessness of God's love
- 6) Isaiah
- 7) December 17th
- 8) Immaculate Conception
- 9) Gaul
- 10) Jesus' birth and His second coming
- 11) December 25
- 12) St. Francis of Assisi
- 13) Silver
- 14) Luke
- 15) Magi (or Wise Men)
- 16) Magnificat
- 17) The Kalenda

## Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Below is a list of area parishes that will be offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent. You may schedule the Sacrament of Reconciliation by contacting the Parish Office 618-532-6291.

DATE	TIME	PARISH
12/5/23	6:30 p.m.	St. Theresa, Salem
12/10/23	3:00 p.m.	St. Mary, Carlyle
12/10/23	5:00 p.m.	St. Boniface, Germantown
12/11/23	6:30 p.m.	St. Mary, Centralia
12/12/23	7:00 p.m.	St. Rose, St. Rose
12/13/23	12:30 p.m.	St. Mary, Centralia
12/13/23	7:00 p.m.	St. George, New Baden
12/14/23	12:30 p.m.	St. Mary, Mt. Vernon
12/14/23	7:00 p.m.	St. Anthony, Beckemeyer
12/17/23	3:45 p.m.	St. Charles, Dubois
12/17/23	3:00 p.m.	St. Francis, Aviston
12/17/23	6:00 p.m.	St. Michael, Radom
12/18/23	6:00 p.m.	St. Mary, Mt. Vernon

## Sacrament of Healing.

### Anointing of the Sick

Following Mass on...

Saturday January 14, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 15, 2023 – 10:30 a.m.

St. Mary Chapel Every First Saturday

*In an emergency, please contact Father Steve, Msgr. David, or Father Benny  
Phone: 618-532-6291 X307*

*(it will automatically forward to Father Steve)*

Did you know...

*One of the most notable events in Centralia's history was the Great Centralia Fire of 1893. This devastating fire destroyed a large portion of the city, but the community quickly rebuilt, demonstrating resilience and unity.*

**ADOPT A SEMINARIAN.**  
Please pray for our seminarians. If you would like to send them a card.

**Kenrick-Glennon Seminary**

5200 Glennon Dr,  
Saint Louis, MO 63119

Attention:

Seminarian Mr. Levi James

**Mundelein Seminary**

1000 E. Maple Ave.  
Mundelein, IL 60060

Attention:

Seminarian Mr. Terry Marmion

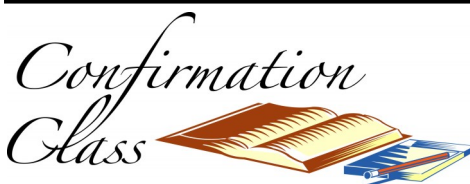
Seminarian Mr. Casimir Cozzi

(Pastoral Internship)

**St. Mary Catholic Parish**

Attention:

Seminarian: Mr. James (Luke) Fitzgerald



Please offer your prayers for our candidates preparing for Confirmation. On Sunday, April 21, 2024, Bishop McGovern will preside over the Confirmation ceremony. The event will include candidates from several parishes: St. Theresa of Avila in Salem, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Kinmundy, St. Lawrence in Sandoval, and St. Mary in Centralia. The ceremony will be held at St. Theresa Church and is scheduled to begin at 11:00 a.m.



On Sunday, April 7, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., St. Mary Parish will be filled with an air of divine joy and anticipation, as it prepares to celebrate the First Holy Communion of its young members during the Holy Mass. This significant spiritual milestone, marking the first time these children will receive the Eucharist, symbolizes their deeper participation in the church's life. It is a day for celebration, reflection, and a deeper connection with the faith community, as these young members take a significant step in their religious life.



## Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

St. Mary Church in Mt. Vernon invites the community to join the celebration of the

Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Tuesday, December 12, 2023. This special event will feature a Spanish language Mass at 3:00 p.m., enhanced by the lively sounds of a mariachi band, honoring the Patroness of the Americas in a culturally rich and spiritual manner.

The church welcomes everyone, regardless of their cultural background or religious affiliation, to this vibrant celebration that blends faith, tradition, and community spirit. Join us at St. Mary Church for this meaningful and joyful occasion.

## NIGHT OF PRAYER

Join us at St. Mary Church in Mt. Vernon, IL, for a spiritually uplifting National Night of Prayer from Friday December 8th to early morning of Saturday December 9th. The night will begin at 9 PM and conclude at 1 AM. This event is a wonderful opportunity for community members to come together in prayer, reflection, and fellowship.

Whether you seek a moment of peace, spiritual growth, or simply wish to be part of a communal prayer experience, this night promises to be a meaningful and enriching experience. St. Mary's looks forward to welcoming you for this special night of faith and community.

## Welcome back to the Mette Family Singers to St. Mary, Mt. Vernon.

St. Mary Parish in Mt. Vernon is excited to welcome back the Mette Family, a renowned group of Catholic musicians, for an evening of music and praise on Sunday, December 17, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

Following their well-received performance last year, the family will once again bring their unique blend of contemporary Christian music and traditional hymns to the parish. Guaranteed to be a spiritually enriching experience, followed by a short social gathering to meet and interact with the family.



## The Sanctuary candle burns in memory of loved ones and special intentions.

"The sanctuary candle is burned continually in a Catholic church as a sign of the continual real presence of Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, under the appearance of the host is kept in the tabernacle in each church building. The candle is a sign to those who wish to pray that Jesus is truly present, looking at each person with love, listening to their prayers, and giving them the graces needed."

Each month, the Sanctuary candle at St. Mary Church and Chapel burns in memory of a departed family member or a special intention. There are months available; contact the Parish Office at 618-532-6291 for information. The recommended donation is \$60.00.

### SANCTUARY CANDLE ST. MARY CHURCH INTENTION

January 2024	Corinno & Anna Leeta Darin
February 2024	Alan & Rosalie Thomas
March 2024	Elliston & Garnier Families
April 2024	Michelle Lehman
May 2024	Ralph & Bernice Sprehe
June 2024	Henry, Dorothy, Theresa Verdeyen
July 2024	Dr. Jerry Beguelin
August 2024	Mary Ballagh
September 2024	Gene Uhls
October 2024	David Schwartz
November 2024	Dr. Avelino & Sequndina Lazo
December 2024	Nall, Hollern, & Duty Families
JANUARY 2025	Henry, Dorothy, Theresa Verdeyen

### SANCTUARY CANDLE SAINT MARY'S CHAPEL INTENTION

January 2024	Louisa Marcum
February 2024	Craney & Crouse Families
March 2024	Roger Holley
April 2024	Kabat & Tomaszewski Families
May 2024	Virobik, Held, & Cozadd Families
June 2024	Hope Marcum Harbin
July 2024	Joe Marcum
August 2024	Gordon & Mary Louise Elliston
September 2024	Robert & Gary Kabat
October 2024	Joe & Louisa Marcum
November 2024	Holy Souls in Purgatory
December 2024	Richard, Michael, Megan & Jacob Neff
JANUARY 2025	OPEN

#### HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST OR NEED A PASTORAL VISIT?

Please contact Prayer Chain Leader Mary Miller if you have a prayer intention 618-292-1229. If you would like to have an intention added or removed, or a visit from the Pastoral Team please contact the Parish Office 618-532-6291.

#### Did you know...

Centralia was once home to the Sentinel Elm, a famous tree under which many important community meetings and events took place until it was destroyed by a storm in 1942. The city sits above a point where the Teutopolis, Herrin, and Murphysboro coal seams converge, making it a historically significant site for coal mining.



## Illinois State Knights of Columbus Annual Vocation Raffle update.

St. Mary's and St. Lawrence Knights of Columbus, Vocation Raffle was a resounding success. A total of 111 booklets of raffle tickets were sold, and thanks to the community's support, the councils achieved a significant return of **\$999.00!** This amount, after deducting \$6.00 per booklet for the raffle, will be used to support seminarians and various charities. A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who contributed to making this event a success.

#### Did you know...

Centralia is unique in that it is located in four different counties: Marion, Clinton, Jefferson, and Washington. This is quite rare for cities in the United States.

## IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

#### Requested Prayers

Blain Loll  
Robin Cimera  
Waylon Vick  
Natasha Lang  
Brian "Gooter" Gurthrie  
Ruby Stratmann  
Deb Steward  
Mark Schwartz  
Father Jim Dougherty  
Those away at College

#### Serving in the Military

Dylan Huether

#### Living in a Care Centers

JoDene Nall  
Jane Greene  
Jeff Alig  
Nancy Herrera  
Shirley Kabat  
Red Schwartz  
Deloris Meador  
Bertha Huehne

Clarice Moran  
Barbara Parrot  
Carol Orrell  
Betty Boxx  
Kay Gunther  
Mike Kennett  
Mike Taylor  
Jerry Grasher

#### Living at Home

Dolores Sanders  
Mary Darin  
Mary Jean Martinelli Warner  
Helen Guinzy  
JoEllen Nannie  
David & Ida May Guthrie  
Barbara Francois  
Loretta Pedtke

#### For the suffering

In Ukraine  
In the Holy Land  
Throughout the World



## Mary's Merry Quilters have been busy putting together quilts.



Submitted by: Sally Tiemann

The Quilter's continue stitching, stitching and more stitching!! The quilt donated to St. Mary's School for their annual raffle was quilted and is really beautiful. It is a Log Cabin design and was quilted in the "ditch". For those not familiar with that term, it is stitching where the seams are put together – not an easy task but the end result is a neat and sharp looking finished product.

Joyce is very dedicated to her "Pet" project – she has been making dog pillows for House of Hope by using some of the many yards of suitable fabric and batting remnants. She just finished and donated nine. How lucky these dogs are to have someone who cares. Thanks, Joyce.

**FYI: If you are in need of a baby quilt, interested in a quilt top, or would like to check out the material we have for sale, please call Sally Tiemann, (618) 830-7604 or visit the St. Lawrence school building (alley drive) any Monday from 9:00-3:00.**

Three of the quilters, Roseann, Mary and Margie went on a trip not everyone may wish to do. They traveled to Cuba! Stating that the country has beautiful flowers and a lot of banana trees, their comments about the life style, shopping, and food were all the same not like home!! We always hear negative comments about life in the USA. Try living in Cuba – a head of cabbage was \$8.00. They dined on lots of rice and black beans (some of the staples). They still plow their fields with oxen. The people are very poor. No stores to shop in. The government controls everything, taking 90% of a tobacco farmers harvest. Commodities are often scarce or not available. They were definitely glad to come back to America.



Mary Miller, RoseAnn Pickett, Sally Tiemann and Lydia Nehrt

## Church Women United Day of Prayer.

Submitted by: Sally Tiemann

The Church Women United World Day of Prayer was held at Cornerstone Church on Friday, November 3rd, with desserts of homemade carrot cake, pumpkin fluff,

chocolate zucchini bars and cookies provided and served by Mary, Roseann, Sally and Lydia of St. Mary Altar Society. This is a wonderful way to share in an Ecumenical event. Church Women United meetings and prayer services are always held during the day so can't be hosted by St. Mary Parish. We were so delighted to be able to join Cornerstone Church who hosted the event.

## Annual St. Mary Altar Society Parish Christmas Party.



We are delighted to extend a warm invitation to you and your family for the St. Mary Parish Christmas Party! This joyful event will take place on Sunday, December 10, 2023, at our Parish Center (Gym), promising an evening filled with fellowship, fun, and festive cheer.

The evening will commence with a Social Hour at 5:00 p.m., providing a wonderful opportunity to mingle and share in the Christmas spirit. At 6:00 p.m., we will gather for a delightful meal.

To help offset the costs of this special event, we are kindly requesting a donation of \$15.00 per person attending. We need a final count by Monday, December 4, 2023, so call the Parish Office ASAP. 68-532-6291. Hope to see you there for some Christmas cheer!

## St. Mary Altar Society provides activities that benefit our parish.

Altar Society, Mary Miller President

Several years ago, the Senior Buddy Program was initiated. To help bring cheer at the holidays, small tokens of love and appreciation are delivered to our church members that are no longer able to attend mass or parish activities due to declining health. These visits have instilled a cherished bond among the givers and the receivers and is enjoyed by all. A list of -shut-ins is received from the church office. Please contact the office at 532-6291 if you are not on the list and would like to be added.

Two members attended the Belleville Diocesan Council of Catholic Women conference that was held at Millstadt, Illinois.

Bishop McGovern was the celebrant of the mass. Two ladies gave personal presentations on their troubled lives and how the Catholic Church was instrumental in the positive changes for them.

12 shoe boxes filled with items for a child's Christmas given to the Belleville Diocese Council of Catholic Women. The boxes will be sent overseas for children in need as many children never receive anything to celebrate the holidays.

We continue to support the library food pantry. Money is donated and a member shops and stocks the pantry with non-perishable items such as instant oatmeal, peanut butter, cereal, and other items such as toiletries. \$25 was sent to Church Women United for the purchase of bingo prizes for the nursing homes.

All women of the parish are members of the altar society and are urged to attend some of the four meetings held. The next meeting is February 13, 2024 at 7 pm in the school cafeteria. It's a great way for new church members to meet fellow ladies of the parish.



# TRIVIA Night

**Saturday, February 17, 2024.**

Get ready for an evening filled with brain-teasing fun and camaraderie, as the much-awaited Annual St. Mary PTO Trivia Night is all set to happen on Saturday, February 17, 2024! It's time to gather your cleverest friends and family to form the ultimate trivia team. The night promises to be a whirlwind of challenging questions, fantastic prizes, delicious food, and refreshing drinks, ensuring a memorable experience for everyone.

The St. Mary PTO Trivia Night has a reputation for being a highly entertaining event, drawing in large crowds each year. Keep an eye on the bulletin for additional information. Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to test your knowledge, enjoy great company, and support the St. Mary PTO in style!

## Lent Fish Fry Starts Friday, February 16th. A Feast of Flavors Awaits!"

Before you know it that time of the year when the amazing aroma of deep-fried fish fills the air, signaling the start of the much-anticipated Lent Fish Fry. Hard to believe, but it's true – our beloved Lent Fish Fry is just around the corner, commencing on Friday, February 16, 2024, and continuing every Friday until March 22, 2024.

This year, the event promises to be more delightful than ever. Our dedicated crews are all geared up to serve those succulent deep-fried fish dinners that have become a staple of this season. But that's not all! In addition to the classic fish fry, a variety of other delicious entrees, both baked and fried, will be available to cater to every palate.

For those looking for something a bit different, our menu also includes a range of plates and sandwiches, each prepared with the same love and care

that goes into our famous fish dinners. Whether you're a fan of the traditional fish fry or eager to try something new, there's something for everyone at this year's event.

And let's not forget the sweet ending to a perfect meal – the free-will dessert stand! Be sure to stop by before you leave and pick up a delectable dessert. The dessert stand is not just about satisfying your sweet tooth; it's a celebration of our community spirit, with all proceeds going towards a good cause.

So mark your calendars and spread the word! The Lent Fish Fry is an event not to be missed. Bring your family, invite your friends, and join us in this annual tradition that brings our community together in a feast of flavors and fellowship.

*Come for the fish, stay for the fun!  
See you there!*



## Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools week is slated for January 28th through February 4th, a time to celebrate the rich tradition and ongoing impact of Catholic education. This annual celebration, deeply rooted in history, focuses on the vital role of Catholic schools in providing value-based, quality education while nurturing the spiritual growth of students.

Catholic Schools Week is a significant event that honors not just the institutions but also the dedicated educators, parents, and catechists who play a pivotal role in shaping young minds. This year, St. Mary School is at the forefront, organizing a week-long series of events that epitomize the essence of Catholic education.

The origin of Catholic Schools Week dates back to 1974, making it a long-standing tradition. It was established to recognize the contributions of Catholic education in the United States, fostering a sense of community that extends beyond the classroom.

St. Mary School, a beacon in our community, has lined up an array of activities to mark this special week.

The schedule includes engaging educational sessions, fun-filled activities for students, community service projects, and special masses. These events not only celebrate the school's Catholic identity but also encourage students to reflect on their role in the wider community.

One of the highlights of the week is the "Teacher Appreciation Day," a tribute to the hardworking teachers who are the backbone of St. Mary School. Parents and students will have the opportunity to express their gratitude and recognize the efforts of these dedicated educators.

St. Mary School invites all community members to participate in this celebratory week. It's more than just an observance; it's a testament to the enduring power of Catholic education in shaping morally upright and socially responsible citizens.

Join us in this week of joy, reflection, and community spirit, as we celebrate the enduring legacy and future of Catholic education at St. Mary School.

## NEIGHBORING PARISHES MASS SCHEDULE

### St. Lawrence Parish

412 N. Vine Street  
Sandoval, Illinois 62882

**Sunday Mass 7:30 a.m.**  
**Thursday Mass 9:00 a.m.**

### Immaculate Conception of Mary Parish

1550 Main Street  
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

**Sunday Mass (vigil) 5:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.**  
**Monday Mass 8:30 p.m.**  
**Tuesday Mass 5:30 p.m.**  
**Wednesday Mass 8:30 a.m.**  
**Thursday Mass (Hospital) 8:30 a.m.**  
**Friday Mass 8:30 a.m.**

### St. Teresa of Avila Parish

812 W. Main Street  
Salem, IL 62881

**Sunday Mass 11:00 a.m.**  
**Tuesday Mass 9:00 a.m.**  
**Friday Mass 9:00 a.m.**

### St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

N Madison & Sycamore  
Kinmundy IL 62854

**Sunday Mass 9:15 a.m.**

### St. Ann Parish

631 S. Mill St  
Nashville, IL 62263

**Saturday (Vigil) 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sunday: 10:30 a.m.**



## St. Mary financial report, and where are we heading.

*Submitted by: Treasurer Susan Niepoetter & Father Steve*

It is with a deep sense of responsibility and hope that we reach out to you today. Our beloved St. Mary Church and St. Mary School are cornerstones of our community, embodying our commitment to faith, education, and the nurturing of future generations. However, it is important to share with you our current financial situation, which necessitates our collective support and action.

As of October 31st, the financial state of our Church and School presents a mixed picture. For St. Mary Church, we are facing a challenging time. Our income currently stands at \$176,439, against our expenses of \$186,208, leading to a net loss of \$9,769. This shortfall is significant, as it hinders our ability to fully support our pastoral missions and maintain the facilities that serve as our spiritual home.

In contrast, St. Mary School has fared better, with an encouraging net profit of \$27,453, derived from an income of \$235,368 and expenses of \$207,915. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our school staff, parish and community. However, the success of our school is intertwined with the health of our Church, as both are integral to our shared mission.

The stark reality is that we continue to fall short of our budgeted goal of \$7,500 in collections for the Church. This gap impacts our ability to provide essential services, outreach programs, and maintain the infrastructure that supports our community's spiritual and educational needs.

We urge each of you, as valued members of our St. Mary family, to reflect on the role that our Church and School play in our lives and in the lives of our children. Your support, in whatever form it may take, is not just a donation; it is an investment in the future of our faith and the education of our children. Whether through financial contributions, volunteering your time, or participating in community activities, your involvement is crucial.

Together, let us strengthen our commitment to St. Mary Church and School. With your support, we can bridge these financial gaps and continue to be a source of hope, learning, and spiritual growth in our community. Thank you for your continued faith, generosity, and dedication to our shared mission.



**Submitted by: Heather Knowles**

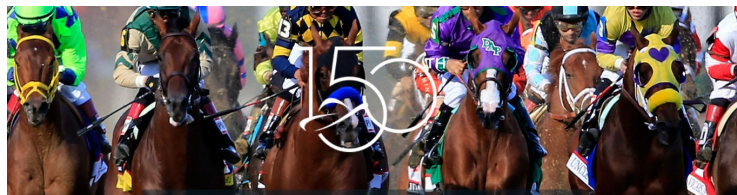
Our annual Turkey Bingo was held on November 5, 2023. Once again, the gym was packed for this afternoon of family fun! Everyone seemed to enjoy the 25 rounds of Bingo, lunch, shopping from several local vendors, raffles, Heads & Tails, and more. We appreciate all of those who joined us and helped to make this day such a success! The Scholastic Book Fair kicked off at Turkey Bingo and continued for a week. The Book Fair profit continues to help with the purchase of many books for our library and classrooms. These books are important in helping our students achieve their Accelerated Reader goals. We are also able to provide things for the school

such as Scholastic News Magazines and other classroom materials.

Thanks to the continued generosity of Mary's Merry Quilters, we are again currently having our annual Quilt Raffle. Tickets have been mailed to Parish Members for a chance to win one of two beautiful quilts or a lovely afghan. The winners will be drawn at the Parish Christmas Party on December 10, 2023. Please mail in your tickets or drop them in the collection basket at Mass.

Finally, the PTO is currently taking orders for Christmas Cookie Trays. These trays will be created with a variety of delicious, hand-made cookies and candies and then beautifully wrapped with an attached personalized card. These trays make wonderful gifts! Small and large tray options are available for either pick up or delivery. To help with the success of this large fundraiser, we are again asking school families and parishioners to help by donating 8 dozen of their favorite cookies or candies. We will be assembling the trays in the SMS gym on Friday, December 15th.. The PTO would love the help of any parishioner who might want to participate in the tray building. It is always a great day of fellowship and teamwork.

## St. Mary's School PTO Gears Up for "A Night at the Derby" Dinner Auction May 4, 2024.



*An Evening of Excitement and Elegance*

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) of St. Mary's School is excited to announce the return of its Annual Dinner Auction on Saturday, May 4, 2024. This year's event, themed "A Night at the Derby," coincides with the 2024 Kentucky Derby, offering an immersive and thrilling experience.

After a brief hiatus, the beloved event is back, promising a night of elegance, excitement, and community spirit. The evening's highlights include live viewing of the Kentucky Derby, a selection of cocktails and dinner, a live auction featuring unique items and experiences, and a gourmet dessert auction with exquisite offerings from local artisans. There will also be a cash bar with signature Derby-themed cocktails, along with various activities like raffles and music to ensure a memorable experience for all attendees. In keeping with the Derby theme, ladies are encouraged to wear their finest hats, while gentlemen are invited to don stylish bow ties, embracing the event's fashion-forward spirit. For more details and updates, community members can refer to the church bulletin.

This event is more than just a fundraiser; it's an opportunity for the community to come together in support of St. Mary's School, known for its dedication to providing excellent education and fostering a nurturing environment for its students. The PTO invites everyone to mark their calendars and join in this elegant and exciting evening, contributing to the school's programs and initiatives.



Submitted by: Deacon Dan Laquet

RCIA classes began in September of this year and will continue until May of 2024. At the present time, we have 3 candidates and 1 catechumen in the program, and a few others who have expressed an interest. Classes have been going well, and we have covered several of the foundational beliefs of our Catholic faith. Our group is very engaged and asks many questions regarding our beliefs, and seeking Biblical answers as to why we believe what we believe. It is a good exercise for all of us. For some, reinforcing what we already believe, for others, providing insights to the beauty of the Catholic faith.

A few weeks ago, we took a tour of our church and pointed out all the elements that play a role in the celebration of the Mass and the sacraments. The members of the RCIA class have been attending Mass and this gave them an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the different rites involved in the church itself. On December 10th, we will celebrate the Rite of Acceptance at the 10:30am Mass. This will be the first of 3 public rituals that will take place for our candidates and catechumens. They will be officially welcomed as disciples, or members (although not yet full members) of our faith community. This Rite is the first consecration by the Church of those seeking Christian initiation. They are literally marked with the cross of Christ as one of God's own people.

Please pray for our RCIA members as they celebrate this Rite, and continue to pray for them as they proceed through their journey of faith, culminating in the Easter Vigil celebration.



Submitted by: Cassandra Groff, CRE

December?! How is it December already? Christmas decorations everywhere, Christmas music on the radio, Christmas lights all over town, just a few of the obvious signs of the Christmas season. Maybe an unpopular opinion, but I am ready for the snow to fall! The PSR students have been busy! Congratulations to the second grade class as they made their first reconciliation! They have worked so hard with their teacher, Miss Sandi, learning all about their faith. The 7th / 8th grade students are working hard with Mike on learning all things confirmation. Advent is also upon us, the beginning of a new year. All of the students have received a fun booklet to pray with throughout the Advent season. We really have some of the best students in PSR. Not to mention our teachers are phenomenal. Thank you PSR parents for raising some awesome kiddos! I am proud of all of them!



## ST. NICHOLAS TO VISIT SMS

St. Mary School is set to host a very special guest on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, as they welcome St. Nicholas in a festive and educational assembly. Scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. in the school gymnasium. St. Nicholas, a figure known for his generosity and kindness, will bring to life the historical and cultural significance of his legacy.

St. Mary School invites you to its annual Christmas program on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Join us for an evening filled with festive spirit and music, featuring our talented students performing traditional Christmas songs. We recommend arriving early.

This event is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the holiday season. Don't miss this joyful and memorable evening! The evening is not just an opportunity to enjoy beautiful music but also a chance to come together as a community, celebrating the season of giving and togetherness.

Parents, grandparents, and other members of the community are encouraged to join in this special event. Their presence will not only add to the festivity but also strengthen our community and shared joy. It's an opportunity for families to engage with the school and create lasting memories.



**FROM SANTA'S OFFICE**  
Join us for a  
*Holly Jolly Christmas Celebration*

December 9th 9:00 am- 12:00  
St. Mary School Gym

\$30 per person ages 2-12  
\$15 per person ages 12 and up  
\$200 for a reserved table of 8  
Come dressed in your Holiday Best!  
This event is open to the public

*Orders must be received by December 1st.*

Venmo @stmarycentraliapto

Include in the notes:

NAME Ho! Ho! Ho!  
# OF CHILDREN  
#ADULTS Santa Claus

QUESTIONS:  
EMAIL:  
HOLLYJOLLYCHRISTMAS618@GMAIL.COM  
PHONE  
618-322-5313







**Looking for that special way to say...**  
**Merry Christmas**  
**Send a Holiday Tray!**  
**ST. MARY SCHOOL**  
**CHRISTMAS COOKIE TRAY SALE**

*St. Mary Elves will special deliver a variety of homemade cookies and candies to that special someone, tastefully wrapped with a personalized card!*  
**Great idea for businesses, clients, friends, and relatives!**

**TRAYS WILL BE DELIVERED**  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2023**  
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2023**

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**  
**s.ford1987@gmail.com**  
**or call 618-322-6459**

**TO ORDER ONLINE: [stmarycentralia.org](http://stmarycentralia.org)**

----- PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN -----

#### ST. MARY SCHOOL COOKIE TRAY SALES ♦ PRE-ORDER FORM

**How to Order:** Drop in the Collection Basket, Mail or Drop Off Order Form to St. Mary School: 424 E Broadway, Centralia, IL 62801 or Email

\_\_\_\_ Large Tray **\$50** 5-6 dozen mixed cookies and candies      \_\_\_\_ Small Tray **\$25** 2-3 dozen mixed cookies and candies

From: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I prefer to pick up my tray (s) at St. Mary School Friday, December 15th from 3pm - 5:30pm

**Personalized Christmas Note:**

**Check Enclosed Payable to "St. Mary School"      Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: (Sarah Alton) email: [sford1987@gmail.com](mailto:sford1987@gmail.com) or call 618-322-6459

**PLEASE PLACE ORDERS BY FRIDAY DECEMBER 8, 2023**



**CHRISTMAS**  
**Cookie**  
**BAKING**  
**crew**

**ATTENTION**  
**CHRISTMAS**  
**COOKIE BAKERS!**

To ensure the success of our sale, we are reaching out to our talented church community bakers to contribute cookies or candies. We kindly request that these homemade treats be brought to the school on Thursday, December 14th, or first thing in the morning on Friday, December 15th. In addition to baked goods, we are also seeking volunteers among our skilled church ladies to craft bows for the trays. Don't worry about materials; we will supply the ribbon, which I can deliver to either the Parish office or the school office. Your support in baking and bow-making is invaluable to us. For any questions or further information, please don't hesitate to contact Sarah Alton at 618-322-6459. We are deeply grateful for your participation and look forward to making this event a sweet success. Thank you so much! – SMS, PTO.



## Message from St. Mary School, continuing our mission of sharing God's joy and educating young minds.

Submitted by: Maria Pryor, Principal

This year is flying by. We recently celebrated our first quarter awards, and we will end our second quarter on December 20. Our students have been extremely busy preparing for our Christmas program. They have learned multiple songs and have been perfecting them over the last weeks. We are very thankful for a true music director to help guide our students in this way.

We welcomed Mrs. Tammy Isaiah to our staff. Mrs. Isaiah will finish out the school year as the 5th and 6th grade teacher. She is an amazing addition to our staff, and we look forward to working with her this year.

Our student council just finished a very successful canned food drive. Collectively, we were able to donate food worth an estimated \$2,400 to the CCBA food pantry. I'm confident that many families were helped during the Thanksgiving season and will be helped for Christmas. This is a true testament to what the school and family partnership is working toward.

As we approach the Christmas season, it is important for us at St. Mary to remember that we have been very blessed with growth over the last few years. We have an amazing group of supportive parents, and we have the best students around. Our school promotes high academic success, structure, and discipline as well as a faithful foundation. We work to teach our students how to live a virtuous life in accordance with how Jesus lived, and without such wonderful families, none of it would be possible.

Over the next weeks, we will prepare for the birth of Jesus. While we love to have fun with our Christmas spirit week, it is not lost on us the reason that we celebrate Christmas. Classes will be learning the true meaning of such an important time.

Please continue to keep our school in your prayers.





## St. Mary School's Great Pumpkin Drop: A High-Flying Halloween Experiment.

In a unique blend of Halloween festivities and scientific inquiry, St. Mary School turned the holiday into an educational experience with their first-ever "Halloween Pumpkin Drop". The schoolyard buzzed with excitement as each class, armed with a pumpkin and an array of art supplies, took on the challenge of creating a pumpkin package that could survive a drop from dizzying heights.

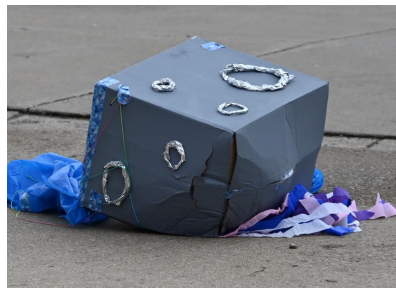
The project kicked off with students unleashing their creativity, decorating pumpkins with vibrant colors and imaginative designs. The artistic flair was evident in each pumpkin, showcasing the students' impressive art skills. But the challenge was just beginning. The next step required them to engineer a box that could protect their festive gourds from high-altitude drops.

Anticipation reached a peak as the Centralia Fire Department arrived with their ladder truck, ready to assist in this high-flying experiment. The schoolyard transformed into a scientific testing ground, with the fire department's ladder extending 25, 50, and even 75 feet into the sky.

The first drop from 25 feet was a critical test of durability. While some classes witnessed their pumpkins survive, others weren't as lucky, their creations barely holding together upon impact. The crowd held its breath as the ladder rose to 50 feet, challenging the students' designs further. Remarkably, several pumpkins emerged unscathed, drawing cheers from the onlookers.

The ultimate test was the 75-foot drop. Here, the champions emerged, their secret weapon: a well-designed parachute. These pumpkins floated gracefully to the ground, intact and triumphant, to the awe of students and firefighters alike.

The event was more than just a fun activity; it was a hands-on lesson in physics, engineering, and teamwork. As pumpkins soared and fell, students learned about gravity, impact resistance, and the importance of careful planning. The Halloween Pumpkin Drop was a resounding success, fostering a spirit of learning and celebration. It wasn't just the students who had a great time; the dedicated firefighters shared in the joy, delighted by the community's enthusiasm and ingenuity. St. Mary School's experiment proved that with a bit of creativity and a lot of science, even pumpkins can fly!







# KISS THE PIG

Guess what? Our "Kiss the Pig" fundraiser was an oinking success! We saw our brave students and staff pucker up for a big, smoochy kiss with our adorable piggy guest. It was a day filled with laughter, cheers, and some unforgettable piggy pecks! Here's the squeal-worthy news: Together, we raised a whopping \$12,000! Yes, you read that right - thousands! This wouldn't have been possible without the incredible efforts of everyone who organized, supported, and participated in this unique and fun event.

A huge shoutout to our top fundraisers who earned the honor (or should we say, the hilarious duty?) to choose who kissed the pig. From fellow students to staff and teachers, no one hesitated to show some love to our four-legged star.

This event was not just about the kisses; it was a testament to our school's spirit and commitment to making a difference. So, hats off (and lips ready) to everyone who made "Kiss the Pig" a day to remember!



At St. Mary School, over 100 children dressed in creative costumes enjoyed a memorable Trunk or Treat event. The schoolyard transformed into a festive scene with cars, trucks, and SUVs decorated by parents, friends, and parishioners. Children delighted in collecting so many treats that some bags required two to carry. The event showcased not only Halloween fun but also the strong sense of community, with everyone contributing to the joyous atmosphere. The success of the night was marked by laughter, unity, and an abundance of candy, leaving lasting memories for all involved.







AutumnFest 2023, held on September 9th, was a vibrant tapestry of community spirit, remembrance, and celebration. The event commenced with the poignant “Never Forget” 5K Run, a tribute to the heroes and victims of the tragic events of September 9, 2011.

The spiritual essence of the festival was further heightened by the Holy Mass, graced with the beautiful Liturgical music of The Cathedral of St. Peter’s string band. The St. Mary School Choir’s patriotic music, accompanied by the presence of the Centralia Correctional Center Honor Guard during the National Anthem, stirred deep emotions of pride and unity among the attendees.

As evening approached, the school parking lot, transformed into ‘the Midway’, became a hub of excitement and activity. Food stands, offering BBQ, brats, and hotdogs, filled the air with delicious aromas, while the Chicken Buffet at the St. Mary School Cafeteria provided a more substantial dining option. The DJ’s lively tunes set the mood for the evening, followed by the energetic performance of Stir of Echoes, which kept the crowd entertained until late into the night. The beer tent, complete with beer poker, along with the cake walk and basket walk, added a fun and competitive edge to the festivities. The younger attendees were not left out, with the St. Mary PTO organizing games and bounce houses that were a major attraction. The wide array of snacks and drinks ensured that the children were well catered to throughout the event.

The success of AutumnFest 2023 can be attributed to the tireless efforts of the community volunteers. Their dedication and spirit were pivotal in bringing this event to life, embodying the essence of community support and collaboration. AutumnFest 2023 was not just a celebration, but a reflection of what a community can achieve when united by shared values and goals. The memories of laughter, music, and unity from this event are sure to resonate in the hearts of those who attended for many years to come.

# RAFFLE WINNERS

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Craig and Donna Roper Car**  
**Keith Resch \$1,000**  
**Lisa Guthrie \$500**

AUTUMNFEST 2023			
	Income	Expense	Profit
Indoor Dining/Donations	\$ 2,964.00	\$ 340.63	\$ 2,623.37
Outside Dining	\$ 2,796.90	\$ 1,226.02	\$ 1,570.88
Cake Walk	\$ 1,183.00	0	\$ 1,183.00
Kids Game	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 850.00	\$ 2,150.00
Beer	\$ 3,899.00	\$ 1,931.80	\$ 1,967.20
Basket Raffle/Donations	\$ 3,114.00	\$ 180.75	\$ 2,933.25
Poker Stand	\$ 475.00	0	\$ 475.00
Margarita Stand/donation	\$ 636.27	\$ 106.27	\$ 530.00
Adult Dice Stand	\$ 353.00	0	\$ 353.00
Mega Raffle/donation	\$ 10,450.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 8,950.00
5K and 5K sponsor	\$ 1,260.00	\$ 1,527.00	\$ (267.00)
Band sponsor	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -
Expenses/Ads, postage, etc.		\$ 1,006.88	\$ (1,006.88)
	<b>\$ 31,131.17</b>	<b>\$ 9,669.35</b>	<b>\$ 21,461.82</b>







## Thanksgiving Reflection, being thankful.

Submitted by: Seminarian Luke Fitzgerald

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, I was thinking about the different things that I was thankful for. As one would expect, family and friends were at the top of the list, but as I kept reflecting, the different things that I have been involved with at St. Mary's in Centralia came to mind

and how hard it will be heading back to school knowing all the great things that are in Centralia. I can't help but laugh about starting off by making a splash at the school's pool party as Raylynn "Pushed" me into the pool. Then there were also the many Wednesday nights hosting the Chosen Season 1 and how inspiring that show has been not only for me but many others as well. It was amazing to see the number of people that came together to make Autom Fest happen and here that we not only ran out of food for the chicken dinner but also the food tent as well. And while there are times that I'm physically tired, spiritually and emotionally I am energized to serve God's church more than ever. I consider myself extremely lucky to serve such a large, warm, and caring community of people.

Now that Thanksgiving is over and it gets closer to Christmas, our focus shifts from a table of turkey and thanks to the manger and hope. In reflecting on the nativity scene there are two things that I find interesting. The first is how God came into the world not in a royal palace as one would expect for a king to be born into, but instead we find Jesus being born into a poor and humble manger. For many of us, we will most likely never know what it is like to live in a royal palace with servants to do all the things we would rather not do. But each of us at one time or another have experienced what it is like to be broke. This points to how relatable God wants to be with us. God's transcendence is not one of separation and division, but one that seeks and desires to create a special and unique personal relationship that goes beyond measures. The second is that Jesus was born in a manger, a feeding trough, the dinner table for animals. From the very start to the last supper God was

making the statement that he was going to not only feed the world, but to be the very source of that food for us to consume.

Just thinking about how God not only provides for us, but has become the very thing that we need is not only amazing but mind blowing. That we find this gift of self from God in the Eucharist, his very body blood soul and divinity is made present to us at adoration or in receiving communion. So this Christmas, as we approach the Eucharist, let us do so with the reverence that we see in the Wise Men, making our Amen fully mean Amen, and having a bended knee as we come before our Lord and King.

**Dear Luke,**

**Thank you!**

*As we bid farewell to you after this joyous Christmas season, the hearts of St. Mary Parish and St. Mary School overflow with gratitude and warmth for the time you have spent among us. Your presence here has been a true blessing, touching lives in ways more profound than words can express.*

*You have woven yourself into the fabric of our community, leaving indelible marks of kindness, wisdom, and faith. The halls of St. Mary School echo with the laughter and learning you inspired, and the pews of our parish bear witness to the spiritual guidance you have provided. Your dedication to service, your compassionate heart, and your unwavering commitment to God's work have not only enriched us but also set a remarkable example for all.*

*As you return to the seminary in January, we want you to know that you are not just a passing visitor in our lives, but an integral part of our St. Mary's family. Your absence will be deeply felt, but we take solace in the knowledge that you are following your calling and continuing your journey in faith.*

*Remember, you will always have a home at St. Mary's. No matter where God's path leads you, our doors will always be open, and a light will always be left on for you.*

*May God bless you with strength, wisdom, and peace as you continue your theological studies and spiritual journey. You are in our thoughts and prayers, and we eagerly await the day when we can welcome you back, even if just for a visit.*

**With heartfelt thanks and God's blessings,  
Saint Mary's Parish Family and School.**

### **Please update your phone number or mailing address.**

**Many have dropped their land lines, if you are using a "cell phone" ONLY - please update!**

We want to keep in contact with you! If you are not a member of St. Mary Parish family, or if you would like to receive the weekly bulletin in the mail please complete the below information and return it to the parish office.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the entire team, we extend a heartfelt thank you to every person who supported our Turkey Bingo and Vendor Fare event. The financial results speak for themselves, with a remarkable total income of \$8,355.75. After accounting for expenses of \$2,235.78, we are proud to announce a profit of \$6,119.97 as of November 20th. These funds are vital for our ongoing and future projects, and we are immensely grateful for your contribution to our cause. Thank you once again for your support and for being an integral part of our community.



# Knights of Columbus Events

**St. Lawrence Knights of Columbus #11758**

**St. Mary Knights of Columbus #1025**

In the heart of our community, where faith and education intertwine, the Knights of Columbus stand as beacons of hope and support. Their unwavering commitment to St. Mary School and St. Mary Parish in Centralia, as well as St. Lawrence Parish in Sandoval, has not only enriched us but also bolstered the spirits of everyone involved. At St. Mary School, Centralia, the Knights' support has been a cornerstone in the development of educational programs. From funding scholarships to upgrading facilities, their contributions have touched every aspect of the school's operation. This support extends beyond financial aid, fostering an environment where values such as community service, academic excellence, and faith formation are deeply ingrained in the students' lives.



Congratulations Sir Knight Greg Schwartz, who was inducted into the 2023 Belleville Diocesan Knights of Columbus Honorees. Joining Greg, Rodney & Tara Resch, Anne Schwartz, Greg's mom, his wife Sharon and Father Steve. Greg has served as Grand Knight for Centralia K of C Council 1025 for many years, and is very active at St. Mary Parish.



Cora Oehmke, was on hand to receive the plaque honoring her husband, Mark who passed away. He was a member of St. Lawrence Council #11758. Each year one member who is deceased is honored for their lifelong service. Pictured, Mark Rudolph, Theresa Rudolph, Christina Smith (daughter), Bill Broda and Cora Oehmke.

The St. Mary Knights of Columbus are deeply committed to their parish, demonstrated through their active involvement in various events and initiatives. Key activities include managing food and beer stands at the Autumn-Fest celebration, participating in the Tootsie Roll Drive for disability support, and contributing to St. Mary's maintenance and improvement through repair and development projects. They also engage in fundraising, notably through the Illinois State Council Vocation Raffle. Their long-term dedication is greatly valued by the parish community. Please consider becoming a party of the Knights of Columbus are active in one of the Councils. For information on joining these efforts, contact Greg Schwartz.



Greg Schwartz, Grand Knight of Centralia Council 1025 hands out Tootsie Rolls, during the St. Mary PTO, SMS Truck are Treat. Both Councils had successful drives this year, raising money for those with disabilities.



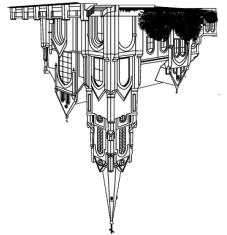
St. Lawrence Knights of Columbus has been a longtime supporter of the Pregnancy Care Center. Pictured above are some of the recent donations made to the center.

The St. Lawrence Knights have recently shared updates on their various successful initiatives and charitable efforts. They held the Tuition Assistance Breakfast and Country Store, raising \$1,918.13, which was generously rounded up to \$2,000 and donated to the St. Mary School Tuition Fund. Another achievement was the Intellectual Disabilities (Tootsie Roll) Drive, where they exceeded the state goal by collecting \$1,175.33, with plans to allocate these funds at a later date. October was marked by a series of Pro Life activities, including praying the rosary before Sunday masses, organizing a Pro Life Chain at St. Lawrence Church, and collecting baby care items for the Marion County Pregnancy Care Clinic. The Knights also honored Marcus Oehmke for his contributions to the church, community, and the Knights of Columbus at the Southern Friendship Dinner. Additionally, they made charitable donations of \$250 to the Sandoval Shalom Food Pantry and \$500 to the Sandoval Fire Department's Toys for Tots program. A Memorial Mass was held on November 5th at St. Lawrence Church to remember deceased Knights and parishioners. The council is also collecting used or unwanted eyeglasses at the church to support the local Lions Club. They expressed their gratitude to everyone for their ongoing support and generosity in aiding these community efforts.





**ST. MARY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Parish Family St. Mary, Centralia and St. Mary, Mt. Vernon  
424 E. Broadway  
Centralia, IL 62801  
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## SEASON OF ADVENT

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT BEGINS - DECEMBER 3  
SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT BEGINS - DECEMBER 10  
THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT BEGINS - DECEMBER 17  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 24

**SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE MARY**  
— HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION —  
(VIGIL) THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7TH - 5:30 P.M. (SM)  
FRIDAY DECEMBER 8TH - 8:30 A.M. (SM)  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH 12:00 P.M. (HOSPITAL)

## RECONCILIATION

SATURDAY'S DURING ADVENT 3:15 P.M. - 3:50 P.M.  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 11TH - 6:30 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. (SM)  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13TH - 12:30 P.M. (SM)  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18TH - 6:30 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. (MTV)  
or by appointment, call 618-532-6291 x307

## DECEMBER 24TH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

REGULAR MASS SCHEDULE - 4 PM (VIGIL) SUNDAY 10:30 AM

## SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

### CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 25TH

### THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

(VIGIL) DECEMBER 24TH - 3:30 P.M. (MTV)

(VIGIL) DECEMBER 24TH - 6:00 P.M. (SM)

(MID-NIGHT MASS) DECEMBER 25TH - 12:00 A.M. (MTV)

(MID-NIGHT MASS) DECEMBER 25TH - 12:00 A.M. (SM)

(MASS ON CHRISTMAS) DECEMBER 25TH - 9:00 A.M. (MTV)

(MASS ON CHRISTMAS) DECEMBER 25TH - 9:00 A.M. (SM)

## OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

NO WEEKDAY MASSES - DECEMBER 26TH - 29TH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

REGULAR MASS SCHEDULE - 4 PM (VIGIL) SUNDAY 10:30 AM

MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST. (NEW YEARS DAY)

— NOT A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION IN 2024 —

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST - 9:00 A.M.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

REGULAR MASS SCHEDULE - 4 PM (VIGIL) SUNDAY 10:30