

Parish News

Here is your weekly update. There are also attachments for this week.

While this goes out as a newsletter of what is going on in the Parish and other events in other Parishes in the area there is so much, regarding our faith.

I hope that all families celebrate a Happy New Year. Please remember there is no Faith Formation this Sunday January 5th. It will start next Sunday

Jubilee 2025-Pilgrims of Hope



This year our Church celebrates the Jubilee Year 2025. This year's theme is Pilgrims of Hope.

“Hope does not disappoint.” With these words, borrowed from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans (chapter 5, verse 5), the solemn invitation to the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025 begins. The special papal document, or “Bull of Indication,” was published in Rome on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. In it, our Holy Father Pope Francis formally invited all Catholics, indeed all of Christendom, to celebrate the Ordinary Jubilee Year of 2025. The last [Ordinary Jubilee](#) was observed with much fervor in the year 2000. This took place during the latter years of the illustrious pontificate of Saint John Paul the Second. According to the current liturgical and spiritual practice of the Roman Catholic Church, Ordinary Holy or “Jubilee” Years are called and celebrated every quarter century

Pope Francis opened the Holy Year by opening the special Holy Door of the Basilica of Saint Peter in Vatican City. He will accomplish this simple yet significant rite on Christmas Eve, December 24th, 2024. This ritual act will set in motion the whole series of Jubilee events for the following

year until the Jubilee Year is solemnly brought to a close on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord on January 6th, 2026.

The Jubilee Year will conclude, where it began with the ritual sealing of the Holy Door of the Basilica of Saint Peter. In addition to the Holy Door at the Basilica of Saint Peter, there are three other papal Holy Doors in Rome. These are located at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, which is also the Pope's cathedral as Bishop of Rome, the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, and the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. Pope Francis will formally open these additional doors in short order, namely during the Octave of Christmas and in the first week of January 2025.

Conversation Series

We are happy to announce a brand-new Conversation Series. We will meet once a month on the first Monday of the month in the Cow Palace

January 6th @6PM

Hope you can join us for this new and exciting spiritual, education opportunity open to all

Parish Giving-

The Parish is pleased to introduce "Enhancing Stewardship through Electronic Funds Transfer. It is convenient no more searching for a checkbook or Sunday morning stops at the ATM. To excess simply Log on the parish website www.sacredheart-saintmary.org and click on the Parish Giving Log and follow the easy registration instructions. It is Secure.

Stewardship-

Operating expenses for the Parish on a weekly basis are \$6,900.00 Collection.

Stewardship for 12/15/24

Ordinary \$6043.00

Immaculate conception \$1789.00



Hope Appeal 2025

The Assessment for the Parish is \$32,143.00

Currently received as of 12/4/24 we have collected \$25,847.02



As always, I like to share the deep traditions and meaning of our Church. What a great way to learn as a family and learn more about this great Faith of ours.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. Let's look as to why we celebrate this feast.

If you grew up in a household that kept its Christmas tree up until January 6th, you're probably familiar with Epiphany.

This important Church feast has been observed longer than the December 25th celebration of Christmas and remains a key celebration of the liturgical year. It marks a transition back to Ordinary time, which remains until [Ash Wednesday](#), the start of [Lent](#).

What is the Epiphany?

The feast of the Epiphany commemorates the arrival of the magi (sometimes referred to as Three Kings or Wise Men) to visit Infant Jesus.

The USCCB describes the Epiphany simply by saying it “marks the arrival of visitors, identified in Scripture as the magi, to the place where Jesus was born.” The word itself means “divine revelation.”

The Catechism goes a little further, telling us the Epiphany “celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (magi) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee.”

The roots of the celebration of the Epiphany date back sometime between the [third and sixth centuries](#).

The Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th each year and is usually observed on the Sunday between January 2nd and 8th. It is not a Holy Day of Obligation .

The traditional date for the Epiphany is January 6th, though it's often observed on "Epiphany Sunday"—the Sunday between January 2nd and 8th. Hymns like "Christ, Be Our Light" are common at Mass on this day, as we're reminded of the magi following the shining star—and our own call to follow Christ, our Light.

Christmas Day has become a much bigger celebration than the Epiphany, but many American parishes will feature some festivities. Some families will host parties and keep their Christmas trees up. Once the Epiphany is over, it marks the end of the Christmas season.

In Latin American cultures, the Epiphany is sometimes known as Día de Los Reyes or Three Kings Day. Sometimes, gifts are exchanged on this day instead of on Christmas. Children also write letters, left in their shoes, addressed to the three kings, who in return, leave gifts in their shoes.

In Eastern traditions, the Epiphany is sometimes called Theophany. Rather than focusing on the arrival of the magi, Theophony [centers on](#) "Jesus' divinity at this Baptism in the River Jordan."

The three wise men, known as Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar, bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Pope Francis, during his 2023 homily on the Epiphany, shared a new perspective on the magi.

He explained that, while they are best known for the gifts that they receive:

- The gift of call—God calling them.



- The gift of discernment—being able to ignore Herod and choose God's way.

- The gift of surprise—meeting God in a humble manger.

Pope Francis suggests these are calls that we all receive.

"Brothers and sisters, we are all called — the first gift: the call — by Jesus; we can all discern — the second gift: discernment — discern his presence; we can all experience his surprises — the third gift: the surprise," he said.

Given what the Epiphany means to us, and how it celebrates the wise men following a path to Jesus, consider prayers of hope, since it's a feast of great hope as we strive to follow our own path towards Christ.

"Truth, by which the world is held together, has sprung from the earth, in order to be carried in a woman's arms ... Truth, which heaven is not big enough to hold, has sprung from the earth, in order to be placed in a manger." – St. Augustine

Also, consider beginning a novena on this day. The [Holy Family novena](#) or novena to the Holy Infant of Prague are good options.

Since the Gospel for the Epiphany represents some of the most important lines in Scripture, you may also enjoy praying over those words with lectio , and listening to how God's Word may be speaking to you.

Events at other Parishes in our area

Please remember we are all a Catholic Community and need to support each other.

Mary, Mother of our Savior Parish invites all teens in the Greater Utica Area to join us for Youth Ministry Nights:

Who: Teens in grades 7 thru 12 from the Greater Utica Area

Where: Mary Mother Of Our Savior Parish, Seton Center, 2 Barton Ave, Utica (look for the welcome flag)

When: Monday evenings 6:30PM-8:00PM
(following the school calendar)-Start back on January 6th

www.motherofoursavior.org

Our Youth Ministry Nights (YMN) consist of games and snacks, followed by a short faith message. Then the teens form small groups to talk about that topic in a safe, honest, authentic way with their peers. This is a highlight of the night, to hear from peers about the faith, to share doubts and questions and to be lifted up and encouraged in their faith in God, all guided by an adult core team member. Then we go to the chapel for a short prayer service and end with an awesome dinner! We also make sure to include social nights once a month. Social Nights may include: Movie Nights, Camp Fires, Holiday Parties, Trips/Teen Outings like GetAir, Retreats, Service Opportunities and more...

For information please reach out to Brittany Wilcox: bwilcox@syrdio.org

Utica Newman Catholic

Christian Fellowship

For registered College Students/Utica Area

For questions Contact Campus Minister, Pat Gillick @

Uticanewmandoutreach@syrdio.org

Free Pizza and Wing Dinner after every 4pm Sunday Evening Mass

Our Lady of the Rosary Campus

Food for thought





Class restart January 12, 2025

To be compliant with the Safe Environment Program on January 19th, the children in the program will be presented with the Circle of Care program.

Circles of Care is an educational program tailored to our parish catechetical programs. This curriculum originally developed by the Diocese of Manchester has been adapted by the Diocese of Syracuse to address age-appropriate personal safety issues for children and youth in the context of Catholic moral teaching. *The training replaces the awareness training that the diocese had been using since 2004.* The Diocese of Syracuse Catholic Schools use the safe environment education program, Child Lures Prevention: Think First and Stay Safe to teach our students personal safety skills through a series of developmentally appropriate lessons created for grades Pre-K through 12. This program teaches students to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors by peers, adults and family members. Students learn to recognize and avoid potentially abusive and unsafe behaviors and situations. But above all, the program encourages children to treat others with kindness and respect – and to expect the same in return.

First Reconciliation-First Communion

Students making First Communion-it will be on May 4th @ the 11am Mass

I am working with Fr. Mark regarding a date for First Reconciliation. It will be on a Sunday during class time-



Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday 3:15PM prior to Mass

Weekdays 12:15 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Friday.
There will be no Mass on Thursday

Let's remember that as Catholics, the importance of attending Sunday Mass. At Mass we stand at mystically at the foot of the cross and witness for ourselves the same self-sacrifice of Jesus, in an unbloody manner. Mass is a celebration of this sacrifice. It is the active participation of all that come together in the place of worship.

The Epiphany of the Lord

1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalms: 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

2nd Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

While these are wonderful reflections, please remember that they are not to be a substitute for the wonderful sermons of Father or Deacon Kirk at Mass.
As always, I try to find wonderful reflections for this week's Gospel reading. I let the Holy Spirit guide me.



Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

- 1 When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.
- 2 Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to adore him.
- 3 And king Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
- 4 And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born.
- 5 But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet:
- 6 And thou Bethlehem the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel.
- 7 Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them.
- 8 And sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come to adore him.
- 9 Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was.
- 10 And seeing the star they rejoiced with great joy.
- 11 And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- 12 And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country.

Reflection:

Jesus the Light of the World

There is this traditional song entitled “Auld Lang Syne” which means farewell to the old year and welcoming in the new. This is very suitable to begin with our reflection of the Gospel for New Year!

The struggles that we experienced last year are tremendous but we are glad that we are over it. Even though most of us are still dealing with the pain the last year has given us but still the good news is yet to come for us. We really don't know exactly what this New Year brings but let us just prepare ourselves and live in positivity that we all will stay free this year. We will never forget what 2024 brought us but we are certain that we will live 2025 better.

This year is yet another hope for us. The gospel for today talks about Jesus as the light of the world. This is a reminder that each of us have to plant hopes in their hearts as we start this another year. Hope that everything will be better and worry-free, hope that this pandemic will end soon, and hope that our leaders will plant pity in their hearts and look upon their people.

We hope and pray for a better world where children can learn and play freely without the threat of war, without the pain of losing someone they love. This year is another mile that each and every one of us must go through with hearts meant to love and hands willing to do charity.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever comes after me will never walk in darkness." This is what our Lord told us and we must lean on this until the very end of everything. We must follow Him wherever He goes and to follow Him means sacrifice and obedience.

Our New Year's resolution must not be centered on ourselves but should benefit those who are around us. We have to pray to the Lord and ask Him for guidance that we may follow His examples humbly as He will guide us into the light

2nd reflection

Epiphany of the Lord– Matthew 2:1-12

Today is a wonderful feast in our Church calendar: the Epiphany of our Lord! Have you ever had an "epiphany?" When was the last time you had an "epiphany?" An "epiphany" may simply be a sudden realization or a moment of clarity. Naturally, the epiphany this feast celebrates is the manifestation of Jesus as "king of the Jews" and of the world.

This Gospel opens the magi arriving in Jerusalem. I assume their presence caused quite a stir. They kept asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews?" We read that King Herod and "all of Jerusalem" were troubled by their question. Herod immediately called his advisers together and asked them where this "Jesus" was to be born. The priests informed Herod that according to the prophecies in the Scriptures, the "Christ" was to be born in the land of Judah.

Herod then quietly called the magi in. He told them to go and search for the child. And when they found him, the Magi were to send word to Herod. Herod told them that he also wanted to offer homage to the child.

We know the rest of the story. The Magi followed the brilliant star they had seen at its rising. Eventually the star led them to the dwelling where the Child was: a lowly stable. Can you imagine how astonished the kings must have been to find this holy Child in a manger surrounded by

animals? Yet, despite these very unusual and humble circumstances, the kings instantly recognized the Christ Child.

Today may we look for the Child King in our midst. Jesus is there, but we must have open hearts, minds, and eyes. We have the ability to see Him! Will we keep looking for Him until we find Him?



Below is this week's Gospel reading for the children. Please share with them for a understanding of the Gospel reading

Seeking the Savior



Today we have a map to help us seek or find something. (Show kids the map.) I have two things you need to do. #1: You will go with me to seek the star that is hiding in our room. And #2: Every time you hear me say the word “star,” raise your hands and say “Shine, shine, bright star.” Ready?

Let’s look at our map and go to the first place. Where do you think we go based on this first picture? (Lead children to that area.) After Jesus was born, some wise men, also called Magi, saw a star (Pause for kids to say “Shine, shine, bright star.”) in the sky which they believed announced the birth of a king. They traveled to Jerusalem and began to ask, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star (Pause for kids to say “Shine, shine, bright star.”) as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

(Have children look at the map and then go to the second area.) Herod heard about the Magi and their search for a king and he was deeply disturbed. So Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men and said to them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

(Have children look at the map and then go to the second area.) As you know, the wise men did not have a map to guide them to Bethlehem, but they had something even better — they had a star (Pause for kids to say “Shine, shine, bright star.”) to guide them. So the wise men followed information that the priests had given to Herod and the star (Pause for kids to say “Shine, shine, bright star.”) that God had given to guide them and it led them right to Jesus. When they found him, they gave him gifts and bowed down and worshiped him. (Matthew 2:1-12)

(Have children look at the map and then go to the third area to find the star. Give each child a star sticker when they find them.) Wise men, women, boys, and girls are still searching for Jesus. There are people who want to help -- people like pastors and Sunday school teachers. The Bible is the map and star (Pause for kids to respond say “Shine, shine, bright star.”) that will lead to Jesus. All of us can read it every day to make sure we are headed in the right direction to find Jesus!

Dear Jesus, we seek you today because we want to worship you and crown you as our King. Thank You for the Bible that leads us to you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

As well being the Jubilee of 2025 -Pilgrims of Hope, I found this wonderful prayer to reflection the year of Hope

THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity
and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

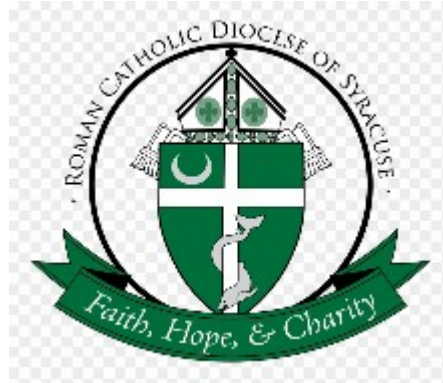
May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

Franciscus



The Diocese of Syracuse has events regarding the Jubilee. A Pilgrimage Diocesan Retreat will be held on March 31, April 1 & April 12 at 3 different sites in the Diocese for 2 hours and reflection each night

A Diocesan Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy at Stockbridge MA in the Fall of 2023

Lynn M. Springer
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