

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 love to share our faith in this newsletter

Our Pastor is celebrating his 50th birthday. The parish will be hosting a celebration for Fr. Mark tomorrow from 8:45-11AM in the school cafeteria. It will be coffee brunch. Parents are welcome to come and wish Fr. Mark happy birthday before class.

With winter weather upon us, please note that your family's safety is very important. Should the weather be to the point that classes are canceled it will be placed on the local TV stations. A text message will also be sent out to all families.

Should a family feel unsafe to come to classes, please text me a message.

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. 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 12/22/24
Ordinary \$5337.00



Hope Appeal 2025

The Assessment for the Parish is \$32,143.00

Currently received as of 12/4/24 we have collected \$27,247.02



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.

This Sunday we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord – have purchased bottles where the families may go to the Church and file with Holy Water for your homes. They will be handed out at dismissal

What Is the Meaning of Jesus' Baptism?

[Bishop Donald J. Hying](#)

We Christians reflect upon and celebrate the baptism of Jesus in significant ways: liturgically, at the conclusion of the Christmas season; devotionally, as the First Luminous Mystery of the Rosary; and theologically, as the scriptural prism for the meaning of Christian baptism.

But if the baptism performed by John the Baptist was meant as a sign of repentance of sin and conversion to a new way of life, it's reasonable to ask:

Why did Jesus, as the sinless Son of God, receive baptism?

Narrated in each of the four Gospels, the baptism of Jesus marks the inauguration of His public ministry — His emergence from a life of seeming obscurity into a life of growing popularity on account of His preaching, miracles, healings and proclamation of mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus steps into the Jordan River and into His mission of redemption through this public religious act. The descent of the dove symbolizes the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus receives as the Christ, Greek for "the Anointed One."

Jesus' Identity

This mark of divine blessing is accompanied by the voice of the Father in heaven who proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17). This mysterious utterance reveals Jesus as the Son of God, the One sent from the Father to accomplish the salvation of the human race. In this dramatic scene we already grasp the identity and function of the Most Blessed Trinity — we see the Father as the One who begets and sends the Son to redeem the human race, the Son as the obedient servant who accomplishes the will of the Father, and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier who empowers the mission of redemption.

Already at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus' fundamental identity is situated in this Trinitarian relationship. In the early Church, the visit of the Magi, the baptism of the Lord and the miracle at Cana together constituted the meaning of Epiphany, for each of these three events reveals, manifests and unveils who Jesus is.

Drawing profound parallels between Jesus' baptism and our own, we can see that, just as Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son at the Jordan, so, too, we receive a new identity in baptism as adopted children of the Father. The fruit of Christ's victory over the power of sin and death is the divine invitation for us to share in the very life of the Trinity. Jesus Christ — namely, the Son — freely shares His very nature with us through the transforming waters of baptism. At the moment of our spiritual rebirth in the font, the Father beholds us with delight, exclaiming, "This is my beloved son, this is my beloved daughter with whom I am well pleased." Christianity first and foremost is about whom we have become in Christ before it is about what we do or how we act. This saving act of spiritual adoption draws us into the very life of God and His merciful grace.

Identification with Sinners

In his book "Jesus of Nazareth," Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI insightfully offers another facet of the baptism of the Lord. The baptismal action of John the

Baptism was markedly different from any other religious rituals that had preceded it. The baptism he offered the crowds that came from Jerusalem occurred only once, signifying a radical break from a former life of sin and a new way of thinking and acting — all of which was framed by the imminent emergence of One greater than John who would “baptize with fire.” The crowds responded to John’s baptism as a reaction to his fiery preaching against sin and the call to conversion.

The retired Pope Benedict sees Jesus’ baptism as an expression of His fundamental submission to the will of the Father and His complete identification with sinners. By submersion in the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is publicly seen as one in need of repentance and forgiveness himself, although He has no need of it in actuality. Jesus is already embracing the enormous weight of humanity’s sinfulness, just as He will do again in a definitive and final way on the cross — labeled then as a criminal and blasphemer. The mysterious events at the Jordan River already foreshadow the saving acts of Christ’s death and resurrection.

Pope Benedict notes that the icons of the Eastern Church visualize this intrinsic connection between the baptism of the Lord and the Paschal Mystery by depicting the waters of the Jordan “as a liquid tomb having the form of a dark cavern, which is in turn the iconographic sign of Hades, the underworld, or hell.” Just as the Lord descends into the swirling waters of death at His baptism, He goes down to the netherworld after His crucifixion to rescue the souls of lost humanity.

Divine Condescension

In this downward descent, this complete identification with sinners, we grasp the radical humility of Jesus. He is the One who empties himself, not clinging to His equality with God but becoming a slave for the sake of our salvation. This is so beautifully articulated in the kenotic hymn of the second chapter of St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians. God could have saved us in any manner that He chose, but He seems to embrace the most difficult and arduous way — the path of Incarnation and accompaniment.

Christianity is the only world religion that believes the omnipotent and mysterious God humbled himself to become one of His own creatures, embracing the fullness of our humanity in order to redeem us from inside our own nature and condition. The Church has never gotten over the wonder of this divine condescension. We celebrate the Word made flesh not only in the glory of Christmas, but in the fullness of the liturgy, prayer and moral life of the Christian tradition.

We can place the baptism of Christ into the total context of His humble identification with us, beginning with the eternal Second Person of the Trinity assuming our flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary and continuing with Jesus' ministry to the sick and sinful, His table fellowship with tax collectors, His loving conversations with people of ill repute, the vulnerability of the Eucharist — as Jesus places himself completely at our disposal in the wondrous sacrament of His body and blood — and His doing the work of a slave during the Last Supper foot-washing.

The Cross of Christ becomes the sacred intersection of God's redemptive mercy and our ancient curse of sin and death. Without ever having sinned himself, Jesus embraces the consequences of our sin, which is death and alienation, and accepts a horrible death, filled with pain and suffering.

Wrapping himself in our sins, He lifts it all up to the Father as a radical offering — a complete holocaust of the self. Executed as a criminal and a blasphemer, crucified outside the city gate as one seemingly cut off from God, Jesus seals His identification with sinners in His own blood.

How does the Father respond to this murder of His Son, this obedience even unto death? When the centurion pierces the side of Christ, what flows out from the side of the crucified One? Not divine vengeance or wrath or retribution, but blood and water, symbols of baptism and Eucharist — instruments of mercy, love, forgiveness and redemption. By accomplishing the saving deed of our salvation through His death and resurrection, Jesus himself becomes the baptismal fountain of the New Covenant.

Clarity of Mission

In Christian baptism, we become adopted children of the Father, members of the Church, the Body of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit. Baptism washes away our original sin and claims us for the kingdom of God. Through this saving sacrament, God fills us with sanctifying grace, with the fullness of the Trinitarian life. To understand the meaning and implications of our baptism is to fundamentally grasp our identity, vocation and mission as disciples of the Lord Jesus and members of the household of God.

In Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, we see Him anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Christ, we hear the Father proclaim His fundamental identity as the beloved Son, and we perceive Jesus' mission as one of humility, a self-emptying love and sacrificial identification with everything in us that was lost, broken and dead.

We spend time and energy seeking a lost object to the extent that we value it. I will spend much more time looking for my wallet or cellphone than I will a misplaced magazine. How infinitely valuable we must be to the Lord God that He sent His own Son to seek and save us in the valley of death! The whole Christ-event finds a clarity of mission when Jesus is submerged in the waters of the Jordan at the hands of John the Baptist.

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)

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 starts this Sunday January 12th

There will be class next Sunday January 19th

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-

The Blessing Cup Meal has been changed to April 19th 12 to 3pm in the School Cafeteria



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 Baptism of the Lord

1st Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Responsorial Psalms: 29: 1-2, 3-4, 3. 9-10

2nd Reading: Acts 10:34-38

Gospel: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

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.



Today's feast is a time to reflect not only on the Lord's baptism but on our own. In an extended sense, when Christ is baptized, so are we, for we are members of his body (Ephesians 5:30). As Christ enters the water, he makes holy the water that will baptize us. He enters the water and we go there with him. He also acquires gifts to give us.

The text says, when Jesus was baptized, "heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'"

1. Access: The heavens and paradise were closed to us after original sin, but at Jesus' baptism, we have access to the Father and to the heavenly places. Scripture says, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand" (Romans 5:1). Elsewhere, Scripture says, "For through Jesus we have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:17)
2. Anointing: In baptism we are not just washed of sins, but we also become temples of the Holy Spirit. After baptism there is the anointing with chrism, which signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit. Scripture says,

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

3. 3. Acknowledgment: Jesus receives this acknowledgment from his Father for the faith of those who heard it and also to acquire this gift for us. In our own baptism, we become the children of God. On the day of your baptism the Heavenly Father acknowledges you as his own dear child. Scripture says, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ ...” (Galatians 3:26).

4. 4. Approval: Jesus had always pleased his Father, but now he acquires this gift for us as well. Our own baptism gives us sanctifying grace, the grace to be holy and pleasing to God. Scripture says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Ephesians 1:1-3).

Consider well the glorious gift of your baptism; if you don’t know the date, do some research and find out. It should be a day as highly celebrated as your birthday.

We have just heard in the Gospel the words that rang out from heaven when Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan. They were spoken by a voice from on high: the voice of God the Father. They reveal the mystery that we are celebrating today, the Baptism of Christ. The Man on whom the Holy Spirit descended like a dove is the Son of God who took human flesh from the Virgin Mary to redeem it from sin and death. How great is *the mystery of salvation!* — [Pope St. John Paul II, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord 2002](#)

This week's Saints of the week:

The saints are models of human excellence, perfected by the life of Christ and the communication of his Spirit. They demonstrate in their lives how to really live and how to really die. They consistently point to the horizon of love which leads to the fulfillment of all human desire: eternal communion with the Holy Trinity

January 17 Memorial of St. Anthony Abbot



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

Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of his ministry. Our baptism marks the beginning of our new life in Jesus.

None is required, but you could use a calendar.

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Luke 3:21-22 (NIV)

January is an exciting time. It is the beginning of a brand new year. Some people like to make New Year's resolutions or promises to themselves about what they plan to accomplish in the new year. The number one resolution that people make is, "I am going to lose weight." I don't think too many people succeed, since it seems to be the number one resolution year after year. I know that it usually makes my top ten list of things I would like to accomplish in the new year.

Even if you don't make any New Year's resolutions, this is an exciting time. It is a time that we can forget our past mistakes and look forward to new opportunities that lie ahead of us. It is a time of new beginnings.

Jesus experienced times of new beginnings in his life too. One of those times was when he was baptized. There were a couple of very important things that happened when Jesus was baptized. First of all, the Bible tells us that the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and landed upon him. The second thing was that God spoke and said, "You are my Son. I love you and I am well-pleased with you."

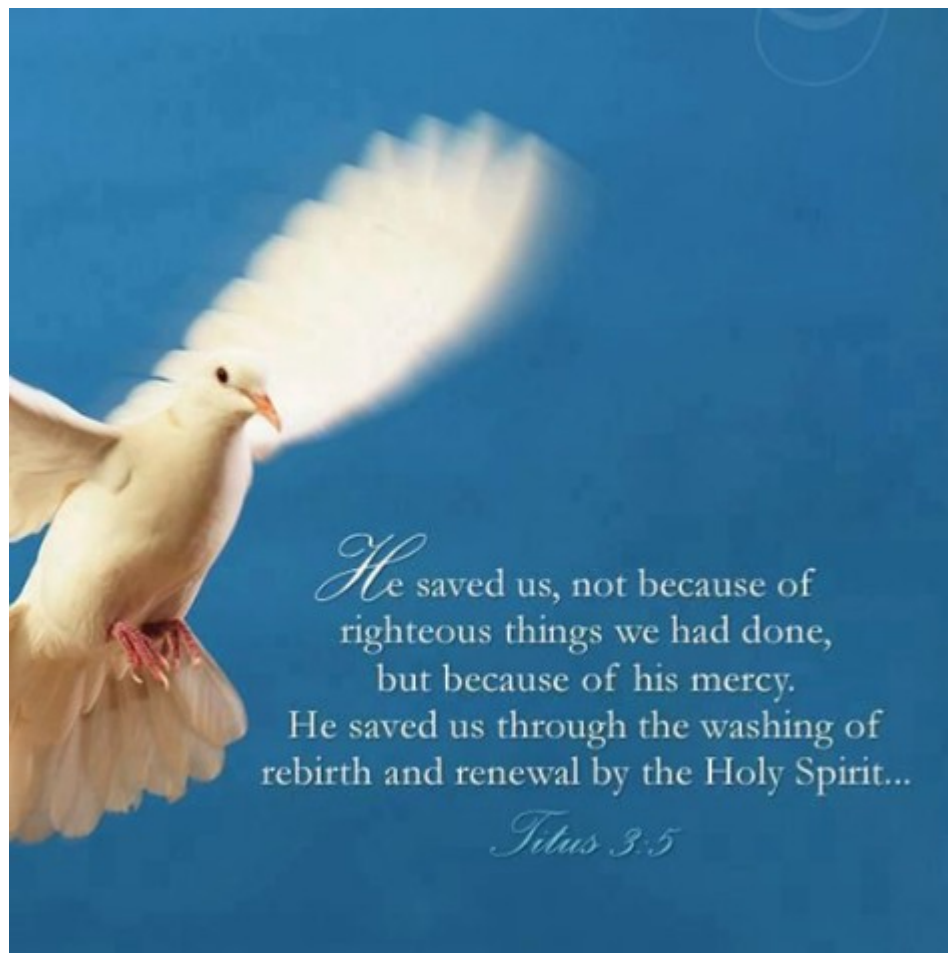
This event marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry here on earth. Up until that time, he had not performed any miracles, but with God's stamp of approval and with the spirit of God upon him, Jesus began to perform great miracles. From this new beginning, many people began to understand that Jesus was truly the Son of God and they began to follow him.

Our own baptism represents a new beginning for us as well. When we are baptized, it shows the world that just as Jesus rose from the dead through the glory of God the Father, we also live a new life in him. (Romans 6:4) God may not always be well-pleased with us, but I think that He looks down with an approving smile when he sees us trying to walk with Jesus.

New beginnings — God gives us opportunities for new beginnings. Let us make the most of them as we live a new life in Christ through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Dear Father, thank you for new beginnings. Help us to make the most of them — not through our own strength — but through the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Prayer is a major part of our Faith to bring us closer to God. This week's Prayer is for the Baptism of the Lord.



He saved us, not because of
righteous things we had done,
but because of his mercy.
He saved us through the washing of
rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...

Titus 3:5



Attached please find the Diocese of Syracuse 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

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