

Immaculata

.....from our parish family to yours





Perpetual Adoration at St. Mary's

On the cover of this issue is a picture of the monstrance that has been used for Perpetual Adoration here at St. Mary's since it began in February of 1998. (It was recently restored in memory of Sylvester Spaeth, and looks better than ever, a beautiful place for Our Lord to be adored!)

When I arrived here at the beginning of July, something I heard many times over was, "When's Adoration going to start again?" How wonderfully moving to me that this was missed so much during the time of the pandemic. During the month of July, each week we have been "getting back into it" by having 40 hours of Adoration from Sunday evening through Tuesday evening. And on Monday August 3, we moved back to our more "normal" schedule of Adoration and into our Adoration Chapel, trying to maintain all the "pandemic regulations" that remain.

As we re-start Adoration, we are also going to make use of an "app" to help coordinate it, for those who have the technology to be connected to it. It allows for people to be reminded either by email or text message of their upcoming hour, and for those who wish to be contacted as a substitute, to make use of that technology to fill hours that need coverage.

A while ago, I read the book titled *The Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle*. It is a very beautiful story of a recently canonized saint, a Spanish Bishop named Manuel Gonzalez Garcia, who spent his life encouraging people to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Manuel was born in southern Spain in 1877, and raised in a very faithful family, and ordained a priest in 1901. He was a very bright and gifted student, his superiors were impressed with his skills and abilities, but it was a very simple truth of the Catholic Faith that he ended up devoting himself as a priest whole-heartedly and completely to – propagating love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Early in 1902, St. Manuel had an experience that affected him profoundly. He was sent to a little town named Palomares del Rio to preach a parish mission. As he traveled to this little town, he was expecting a warm and excited welcome when he arrived. He dreamt of souls being eager to listen to his sermons and many people praying. What he found was the complete opposite –



a town that ignored the Church completely. The sacristan met Fr. Manuel as he arrived in the village giving him a very sad impression of the state of the parish. Such a greeting left Fr. Manuel not only disappointed but sad as well.

The church building looked very dirty, almost abandoned. St. Manuel went immediately to the tabernacle and found it covered in dust and cobwebs. The altar cloths were torn and burnt. Oil was dripping from the sanctuary lamp onto the floor. After observing the dire state of the church, his instinctive reaction was to run from the place and never look back, but he forced himself to remain.

He knelt down before the tabernacle, in the midst of the disarray, for a long time, trying to work out how he would conduct a mission in such a place – and in that moment, everything changed. Somebody was looking at him, and that Somebody was in desperate need of a friend.

That "Somebody" was Our Lord, present in the tabernacle. Fr. Manuel wrote that at that moment:

"All my illusions about the kind of priest I would be vanished. I found myself to be a priest in a town that didn't love Jesus, and I would have to love Him in the name of everybody in that town. I would dedicate my priesthood to taking care of Jesus in the needs of His life in the tabernacle: to feed Him with my love, to keep Him warm with my presence, to entertain Him with my conversations, to defend Him against abandonment and ingratitude, to give relief to His Heart with my holy sacrifices, to serve him with my feet by taking Him wherever He is desired, and with my hands by giving alms in His name, even to those who do not love Him, and with my mouth by speaking of Him and consoling others in His name, and by crying out to those who do not want to hear Him, until finally they would listen and begin to follow Him!"

From that moment, Fr. Manuel devoted his entire priesthood to cultivating love and devotion to the Lord in the Holy Eucharist. What a legacy that he left behind, that we can offer the Lord is a little more time before Him in the tabernacle, in His Presence among us, great gift that the Blessed Sacrament is!

Fr. Mark Steffl, Pastor

Welcome To Our Parish



Gene & Ginger Veerkamp



Bob & Barb Ferk



Andrew & Jaye Turbes and their children,
Kolbe, Gemma, Jacinta, Kaleb, Zellie and
John Paul



Steven & Nola Seidl and their children, Leonard & Louis



Geoffrey & Emily Ferk and their children,
Oakley, Philip, Rose and Eleanor

Welcome to St. Mary's!



Pastor:
Rev. Mark Steffl



Parochial Vicar:
Fr. Zachary Peterson



Parochial Vicar:
Fr. Samuel Perez

St. Mary's, along with the entire Divine Mercy Area Faith Community, is excited to welcome back Fr. Mark Steffl who will serve as pastor with Fr. Zachary Peterson and Fr. Sam Perez as associate pastors (parochial vicars). We are grateful to have them here!



Matthew & Katie Roiger
and their son, Jackson

Religious Ed in Time of Pandemic

By Dan Davis, Director of Religious Education



As we move into the month of August, we are continuing to make preparations for Religious Ed. There will be many challenges this year, but I am confident that with the grace of God, we can persevere through it and come out a stronger Church in the end. We are constantly looking for better ways to teach our children to live and see the beauty of the Catholic Faith – both in the classroom setting through Religious Ed, and in small group discussion and outreach projects through the Youth Ministry.

As of now, we are planning to have classes in-person for Religious Ed. There will be some changes due to the situ-

ation surrounding COVID-19 and there will be additional measures put in place to ensure as much as possible the safety of our students and everyone else. The first day of Religious Ed is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, September 9, and will continue until Wednesday, May 5, 2021.

Coming up next month as well, our 2nd graders from last year (who are now in 3rd grade) will finally receive their First Holy Communion. The celebration will take place on September 27, at the 9:30a.m. Mass. Please pray for our First Communicants as they prepare to receive our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist. We are looking forward to seeing the students again, and we pray that our Blessed Mother Mary, Help of Christians, will keep us under her motherly protection and bring us ever closer to her Son, Jesus.

Born into God's Family

February 11 - August 16, 2020



Benjamin Ambrose Pietig, son of Jeff & Caitlyn Pietig
Elijah Ray Almanza, son of Jorge & Maria Almanza
Eleanor Bernadette Ferk, daughter of Geoffrey & Emily Ferk
Millie Kay Sellner, daughter of Bradley & Becky Sellner
Jack Leonard Anderson, son of Seth & Molly Anderson
Jordyn Marie Pierson, daughter of Ryan & Rebecca Pierson
Gavin John Fischer, son of Craig & Elizabeth Fischer
Andrew Michael Connolly, son of Sean & Chelsea Connolly
Arthur Isidore Anderson, son of John & Amelia Anderson
Catherine Stella & Teresa Maris Losleben, twin daughters of Kevin & Mary Kate Losleben

Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them, O Lord...

February 16 - August 16, 2020



Irene Hauser 2/16/2020
Vernon Schumacher 2/28/2020
Dolores Sellner 2/28/2020
LaDonna Havemeier 2/29/2020
Stella Sellner 3/9/2020

Aloysius Kachelmeier 3/31/2020
Shawn Jirak 4/21/2020
Maria Lux 4/25/2020
Norbert Krzmarzick 5/6/2020
Bernice Eckstein 5/9/2020

Frances Heymans 5/9/2020
Leo E. Schroepfer 5/23/2020
Jerome Koll 5/28/2020
Paul Baechler 5/29/2020

Bequests - Remembering St. Mary's Church in your will is the ultimate demonstration of commitment to this institution and the values it represents. Continuing the good works you support on earth, beyond your lifetime, is the ultimate form of good stewardship.

Holy Matrimony at St. Mary's



Anthony Gazich & Natalie Schwartz 4/18/2020
Gregory Derrickson & Bethany Seifert 5/30/2020
Caleb Callens & Hannah Schmitz 6/26/2020
Christopher Seifert & Justine Bleick 6/27/2020
Bryan Dewanz & Emily Rutscher 7/4/2020

Joachim Ferk & Jaselyn Taubel 7/11/2020
Jared Rothmeier & Andrea Schwartz 7/18/2020
Rick Hoffmann & Wendy Owens 7/25/2020
Ethan Scharmer & Rebecca Schmitz 8/8/2020

Parish Family Profile

by Chris Heiderscheidt

Life is full of lovely surprises. Such is the case for David and Jennifer (Janni) Fischer. Much to their surprise, they lived only two miles from each other's homes as children. That is until the Janni's moved to a hobby farm near Springfield when Jennifer was about two. There she attended and graduated from Springfield High School. She then attended college at Southwest MN State University in Marshall. Upon completion in spring of 2007, she was hired to teach at St. Michael's in Morgan where three years later she became their lead teacher. Two years after that, she decided to go back to college to get her master's degree in Education Leadership.

As Jennifer began working for this degree, she was also ready to meet her future husband, so she thought she'd check into an online dating service. It just so happens the farmer just down the road from her where she was born was looking for his future wife. That farmer happened to be David Fischer who graduated from St. Mary's High School and then attended Alexandria Technical College for diesel mechanics. From there he went to work for Mathiowetz Construction until he began farming fulltime. David recalls their first date, realizing he actually knew her father. "It was kind of crazy how we met," Jennifer thought, "We were at the same events and had the same friends, but apparently we didn't notice one another."

Two years later they were married on August 9, 2014, at St. Michael's Church in Morgan. Jennifer completed college and with her degree was hired as principal, half-time for St. Michael's (Morgan) and half-time for St. Raphael's (Springfield) schools until 2018. These last two years she was back at St. Michael's as teacher and principal. When the difficult decision was made to close St. Michael's School, it posed a tough time for their family. After all, it wasn't just a job for them, as Jennifer poured 13 years of dedication and love into her work there.

But as the saying goes, God doesn't close a door without opening a window. Jennifer was quickly offered



the job to teach math in the middle school at St. Mary's School in Sleepy Eye. Just about then another "surprise" entered the picture. You see, while Jennifer was interviewing for that teaching job, her three year old daughter at the time, Elizabeth, joyfully announced wherever they went, "Mama has a baby in her tummy!" This continued wherever they went as Elizabeth paid no mind to her mother who gently informed her, "Elizabeth, you need to quit saying that; it isn't so." That is, until the couple realized it was so. Elizabeth knew something they didn't! Jennifer will begin teaching later this school year after their baby arrives in mid-September. The couple also has a son, 19

month old Luke.

As many know, running a farm with livestock and raising a family with soon to be three children is work that can fill up a schedule and then some. But David and Jennifer are mindful to be of service however they can. David is a past president of the Sleepy Eye Jaycees (before they disbanded) and currently serves on the Hanska Farmers Coop Board. He remains involved as a member of the Knights of Columbus along with helping as an usher at Mass. Jennifer stays connected through the Council of Catholic Women and looks forward to continuing her lay ministry as Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and lector.

There is no question about this couple's faith. When asked about it, Jennifer glanced at David without any words spoken between them, but given a clear signal before she answered, "Your faith is the basis of everything. There have been some tough times and you can't get through those tough times if you don't have your faith." Their advice to anyone is that when you are going through those tough times, remember to put it in God's hands and realize God has a plan, but it is usually WAY different than yours.

A Piece of St. Mary's History

By: Josh Sellner

This section is dedicated to the history of St. Mary's Parish.



A series of very old photos of the interior of the church recently surfaced at the Sleepy Eye Historical Society Museum. They were taken by Miss Claudia Beck, daughter of John M. Beck and sister of John J. Beck. The two Johns Beck, senior and junior, were choirmaster and organist, respectively, of the St. Mary's Caecilian Choir from 1903 to August, 1908. John J. Beck (junior) went on to be the organist and choirmaster at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis until his untimely death in 1949.

But I digress. Claudia was one of the first, if not the first female photographer in Sleepy Eye, the profession being dominated by men at the time. She likely took this photo in the fall of 1911, shortly after the completion of the interior decoration of the church. The main things that jump out at the observer are the two angels that were on either side of the south rose window. The banners that the angels hold read (in Latin): "Laudate Dominum omnes gentes" and "Laudate eum omnes populi." These inscriptions translate to: "Praise the Lord all ye nations" and "Praise Him all ye peoples." Notice also the location of the confessional directly beneath the rose window, and the radiators on either side of it. The windows also appear to have wooden sills in the bottom of the openings, and the walls wainscot behind the radiators. These features were actually painted onto the walls using a painting technique called "trompe l'oeil" which is French for "trick of the eye." There are more of these photos, so watch for them in future issues of the Immaculata parish newsletters.

Stewardship in a Time of Pandemic

by Fr. Mark Steffl, Pastor

In my previous assignment at Holy Redeemer in Marshall, when the pandemic hit, and everything shut down, practically immediately, I was panicked about the finances of the parish. I knew that there were lots of bills that needed to be paid and many people whose livelihoods and paychecks depended on continued stewardship to the parish. Looking back, it was a good lesson for me, that I should have trusted that the Lord would take care of things better than I could have imagined, that it is His Church and not mine! It was a good lesson for me.

A good understanding of stewardship is that everything we have ultimately belongs to the Lord, and He has entrusted it to us. Knowing this, ***the invitation is given to us to participate in His work in our parish through the contributions we make, and the only limitations we have on what we can do as a parish are our own limits on our generosity.***

This time of pandemic has given me an invitation to look and see how I might be more generous in my own resources, and that is ***an invitation that I would like to extend to everyone, of an extra or additional gift or contribution that goes beyond what normally is given in this upcoming fiscal year.*** (And I promise to do the same myself!)

Included in this newsletter is a summary of how we ended this fiscal year as a parish. You will see that we did end "in the red" by \$127,322.00. Of course, we cannot do this for too long without getting into some difficulties and having to make some tough decisions. At St. Mary's, 23% of our revenue comes from fundraising that goes beyond normal Sunday contributions and school tuition. This year, there is a question about how we will or won't be able to have those fundraisers and how successful they will be, in comparison with past years. I am not trying to paint a "grim" picture of things, but instead see this as an opportunity to trust in the Providence of the Lord, and also as an invitation to consider our stewardship response as individuals and families. As well, I promise to do what I can to also do the best in responsibly using everything in the best way that we can to continue fulfilling the mission of Jesus at St. Mary's.

Church of St. Mary Financial Report

For the Fiscal Year July 1, 2019 thru June 30, 2020

Parish Revenue	Actual	Budget	Parish Expense	Actual	Budget
Sunday Offertory			Administrative Expense		
Adult Envelopes	\$ 597,421	\$ 610,000	Salaries & Benefits	\$ 184,491	\$ 190,710
Youth Envelopes	\$ 3,398	\$ 4,000	Diocesan United Fund	\$ 77,601	\$ 75,000
Loose Plate	\$ 30,104	\$ 40,000	Other Admin Expense	\$ 174,382	\$ 146,675
			Catering Expense	\$ 40,464	\$ 52,000
Total Sunday Offertory	\$ 630,923	\$ 654,000	Total Admin Expense	\$ 476,938	\$ 464,385
Special Collections	\$ 138,391	\$ 118,300	Worship Expense	\$ 25,253	\$ 22,500
Other Revenue			Other Expense		
Universal Collections	\$ 5,568	\$ -	Social Concerns	\$ 5,568	
Fundraising & Donations	\$ 218,147	\$ 180,741	Misc. Expense	\$ 7,049	\$ 4,049
Misc. Revenue	\$ 39,952	\$ 34,700	Total Other Expense	\$ 12,617	\$ 4,049
Total Other Revenue	\$ 263,667	\$ 215,441			
			Facility Mgmt Expenses		
Catering Income	\$ 76,475	\$ 90,000	Repairs / Improvements	\$ 168,197	\$ 129,978
Interest	\$ 18,762	\$ 6,509	Utilities / Maintenance	\$ 168,197	\$ 129,978
Total Parish Revenue	\$ 1,128,219	\$ 1,084,250	School Subsidy	\$ 578,848	\$ 552,271
Religious Ed Revenue	\$ 32,096	\$ 33,665	Total Parish Expense	\$ 1,261,853	\$ 1,173,184
Elementary School Revenue			Religious Ed Expense	\$ 48,835	\$ 54,945
Operating Revenue			Elementary School Expense		
Tuition Income	\$ 449,796	\$ 425,822	Administrative Expense		
Fundraising & Donations	\$ 114,756	\$ 49,851	Salaries & Benefits	\$ 591,552	\$ 603,766
Other	\$ 40,581	\$ 39,145	Administrative	\$ 101,779	\$ 70,381
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 605,133	\$ 514,819			
			Total Admin Expense	\$ 693,330	\$ 674,147
Athletic Program Income	\$ 1,620	\$ 3,000	Instructional Expense	\$ 43,532	\$ 27,500
Caribbean Knight Income	\$ 69,750	\$ 69,750	Facility Management Expense		
Parish Subsidy	\$ 192,356	\$ 231,967	Repairs / Improvements	\$ 128,642	\$ 114,388
Total Elem School Revenue	\$ 868,860	\$ 819,536	Utilities / Maintenance	\$ 128,642	\$ 114,388
			Total Facility Expenses	\$ 128,642	\$ 114,388
			Athletic Program Exp	\$ 3,355	\$ 3,500
Learning Tree Revenue	\$ 36,849	\$ 35,000	Total Elem School Exp	\$ 868,860	\$ 819,536
High School Revenue			Learning Tree Expense	\$ 41,610	\$ 42,611
Operating Revenue			High School Expense		
Tuition Income	\$ 472,300	\$ 495,241	Administrative Expense		
Fundraising & Donations	\$ 77,366	\$ 30,926	Salaries & Benefits	\$ 717,392	\$ 673,751
Other	\$ 40,722	\$ 41,695	Administrative	\$ 70,174	\$ 62,881
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 590,387	\$ 567,863			
			Total Admin Expense	\$ 787,566	\$ 736,632
Athletic Program Income	\$ 119,592	\$ 115,000	Instructional Expense	\$ 57,115	\$ 59,693
Caribbean Knight Income	\$ 69,750	\$ 69,750	Facility Management Exp		
Parish Subsidy	\$ 386,492	\$ 320,304	Repairs / Improvements	\$ 137,510	\$ 115,888
Total High School Revenue	\$ 1,166,221	\$ 1,072,917	Utilities / Maintenance	\$ 137,510	\$ 115,888
Nex-Tu-Nu II Revenue	\$ 57,362	\$ 70,000	Total Facility Expense	\$ 184,030	\$ 160,704
Other Revenue	\$ 383,195	\$ 438,808	Athletic Program Expense (Including Coaching Salaries)	\$ 184,030	\$ 160,704
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 3,672,802	\$ 3,554,175	Total High School Expense	\$ 1,166,221	\$ 1,072,917
			Nex-Tu-Nu II Expense	\$ 26,894	\$ 24,675
			Other Expenses	\$ 385,851	\$ 378,283
			Total Operating Expense	\$ 3,800,123	\$ 3,566,150
			Net Income (Loss) From Operations	\$ (127,322)	\$ (11,975)

St. Mary's Catholic Church

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Parish Staff:

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Fr. Zachary Peterson – Associate Pastor

Fr. Sam Perez – Associate Pastor

Deacon Mark Kober - Permanent Deacon

Deacon Mike McKeown - Permanent Deacon

Sean Connolly - Parish Liturgist

Dan Davis - Director of Religious Education

Matt Grausam - Business Manager

Chris Heiderscheidt - Development Director/Office Manager

Joan Windschitl - Parish Secretary

Josh Sellner - Maintenance Director

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Joan Windschitl, Josh Sellner, Matt Grausam

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Upcoming Events...

August

13-AFC Baptism Class

15-The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

24-1st Day of School for SEPS

25-1st Day of School for SESM

26-Religious Ed Teacher Orientation

September

2-Religious Ed Parent mtg

9-Religious Ed begins

12-SESM Alumni Golf Tournament

18-Marathon for Non-Public School Education

27-First Holy Communion

October

3-God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage Class

8-AFC Baptism Class

13/14-DNU Pastoral Leader Days

15/16-MEA

18-World Mission Sunday

November

1-All Saints Day

2-All Souls Day

21-Night of Knights/Hall of Fame

22-Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

26-Thanksgiving Day

29-1st Day of Advent