

PASTORAL STAFF

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Terry Kerr
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Merry Christmas!

If you are joining us today for the first time, or if you are returning to church for the first time in a while, or you join us every weekend - welcome home. While you are here I hope you experience the joy and peace you're searching for this Christmas. On behalf of the entire pastoral and support staff of St. Mary's Church I wish all of you and your families a Merry and Blessed Christmas.

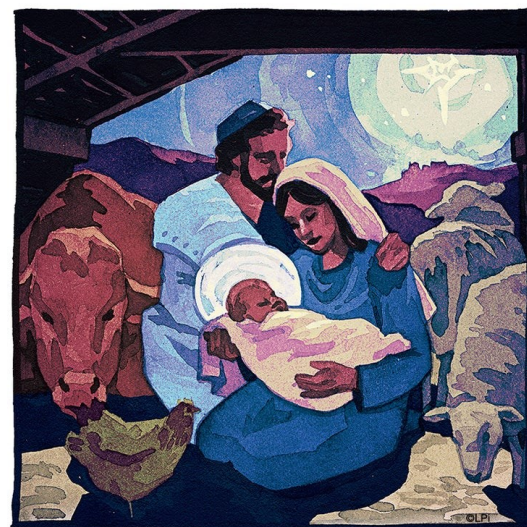
The Gospel for Christmas Morning recalls the Shepherds visit to the new born Jesus in the manger. The Gospel tells us that the shepherds came and saw the child and then ran off to tell everyone the story. The Gospel also tells us that, "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." This passage always reminds me of my mom on Christmas morning. While everyone else, including me, was rushing about eating and opening presents, I still have this image of my mother sitting back, sipping her coffee and taking it all in, enjoying and loving her family.

As always, our Blessed Mother Mary is an inspiration for all of us. She reminds us that the important parts of these holidays are not to be found in the rushing around to open gifts and the preparing of decorations, food and drinks for guests, but the important part is the gift of family and loved ones around us. We can get so caught up in the commercial aspects of this holiday that we forget the most important part, the gift of each other. As Mary rested in the stable and watched person after person come in and adore her new born child, she reflected on each individual interaction. She welcomed the opportunity to watch as one person after the next met her son, their savior, and God in person.

This Christmas let's do ourselves a favor and give everything an appropriate priority. The gifts, decorations, food and drinks play a big role in our gatherings, but they are not the important part. So why waste so much energy on them? Instead let's spend more time and energy making sure our family and friends know how much we care for and love them. Maybe there is a relationship in our family that is strained or broken. What a blessing it would be this Christmas to be Christ to that person and extend an opportunity for forgiveness and bring healing to a broken relationship. There is nothing that creates more joy than forgiving and being forgiven. So often we talk about how our culture is in danger of losing the true meaning behind Christmas. We say, "they are removing Christ from Christmas." If it is truly important to us to keep the real meaning of Christmas, then it must start with us, in our own homes. As in the aforementioned Mary example, let's make family and friends the priority this Christmas. By sharing the forgiveness God has first given to us, we can truly live up to our mission of keeping Christ in Christmas. May you and your families have a joyful and blessed Christmas.

A very Merry and Blessed Christmas,

Fr. Bob



Welcome to St. Mary Parish!

We are a vibrant, prayerful, compassionate and family-friendly parish and would like to introduce you to the many Volunteer Organizations and Faith Groups within our Parish. All are happy to welcome new members.



The Knights of Columbus Sacred Heart Council 1847

The K of C is a world-wide organization of Catholic men. Together, we empower Catholic men to live their faith at home, in their parish, at work and in their community.

Knights assist the sick and disabled, and protect those who can't protect themselves. We do it to become better husbands, fathers, sons, neighbors and Catholics. The Knights of Columbus invest our time, effort and resources into our values: **Charity. Unity. Fraternity. Patriotism.**

Brother Knights come from many places, backgrounds and stages in our lives. We are all of one faith, a fraternity of men striving to better ourselves and our world - To put our values into action.

Join us at kofc.org/join or reach out to Grand Knight Michael Perkins at phone/text: 508-446-2865 or knightsforcolumbus1847@gmail.com

Liturgical Ministry Opportunities

Lectors proclaim the Word of God at Mass each Sunday and on Holy Days. Eucharist Ministers are members of the laity who assist the priests and deacons in the distribution of the Eucharist. For More information, please contact John Ristaino at johnmristaino@gmail.com or 774-571-9808.

Altar Servers

Boys and girls in the parish, third-grade and older, are invited to participate in the liturgical services as altar servers. Altar servers will assist the priest on the altar two or three Masses a month. For more information please contact: pastor@stmarysfranklin.org

Adult Choir

This is a traditional choir for adults in the parish, singing in four-part harmony. Psalmody, hymn-singing, and anthems are explored, as are various vocal techniques and music reading. The Choir sings at the 10:30 Sunday Liturgy, as well as various additional services from September to May. Rehearsals are weekly, on Thursday evenings from 7:30-9:00pm. For more information please contact Terry Kerr at 508-541-3286 or tkerr@att.net.



St. Vincent DePaul Society

The St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVdP) is a volunteer, lay Catholic organization of men and women in our Parish. Members grow spiritually and live the gospel by helping-out neighbors within our community, regardless of religious affiliation. New volunteers are always welcome and receive an orientation and training.

Assistance: A person or family in need is encouraged to call SVdP (**508-918-2291**). Society members will respond to the call and make arrangements for two SVdP members to make a home visit to determine how best to be of help. All information is kept confidential, and each person is treated with dignity and respect.

Donation: SVdP Society funding comes from donations. St. Mary Parish parishioners and parish groups, including the Knights of Columbus, have been very generous. The Society maintains a small non-perishable **Food Pantry** made possible by generous food donations from parishioners.

For **Assistance** or to Volunteer, please call or email: **508-918-2291** or svdp02038@gmail.com

Donations – Mail check to: SVdP Society, St. Mary Parish, One Church Square, Franklin, MA 02038



Catholic Women's Club

Is a religious and social organization for women of the parish, providing a variety of spiritual and social activities throughout the year. We also award scholarships to Franklin graduating seniors planning to attend college. Please contact Christine Cadorette at 508-520-9157

Respect Life Commission

Assists in organizing and educating parishioners on the Catholic Church's teachings on the dignity of human life, and create *prayer* opportunities that support the respect life mission of the Catholic Church. For more info contact Deacon Ron at: gerwat@verizon.net



MEN'S MINISTRY

Men's Faith Formation

The Men's Faith Forum a great way for men in the parish to connect and support each other on our journey to be more Christ-like. All men, wherever you are on your faith journey, are welcome. A typical meeting will consist of gathering time with coffee and bagels, an opening prayer, a thought-provoking video followed by a small group discussion. Each session stands on its own so join us when you can.

We meet on the **first Saturday of each month at 8:00 a.m.** in St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hall, with the first meeting being held on January 6, 2024. Each session will run for one hour. And while this is faith formation, we do talk about football, golf and such things over coffee. If you have additional questions, please contact Regis Schratz at: rschratz@comcast.net



Pastoral Visitation

St. Mary Parish recognizes its special responsibilities to the homebound and residents of the various Assisted-Living and Nursing facilities in Franklin. We are pleased to offer volunteers the opportunity to minister to these individuals as Pastoral Visitors.

The essence of this ministry is to listen, pray, share the sacrament and show God's love to those in need. Pastoral visitation provides parishioners the chance to serve Jesus by bringing the Holy Eucharist as well as the care and concern of the parish community to those in need.

Ministry to those in our elder and nursing facilities includes conducting regular Eucharistic services and sometimes visiting individual residents to pray with them and/or bring them Communion. Recitation of the Rosary is also offered at some facilities. To learn more about this ministry, contact Pastoral Associate, Leo Racine, at: 508-528-0020 or pastoralassociate@stmarysfranklin.org



Women's Faith Formation

Our goal is to present and discuss pertinent areas of our faith through highly regarded and professionally created videos on a variety of faith-based topics.

Our monthly evening Zoom meetings allow women an opportunity to take a break from their daily routines for one hour to listen to interesting, dynamic and faith-based presentations. It is a wonderful way to fellowship with one another as we walk this journey of faith together. **All meetings are scheduled via Zoom.** Please join us!

For more information, please email Denise D'Amico at: denise.damico@aol.com

Bereavement Ministry

The Bereavement Minister meets with the family who has suffered the loss of a loved one to offer comfort and support. They help the grieving with selecting the readings, music and choosing the family/friend participation in the funeral liturgy.

For More Information, please contact Pastoral Associate, Leo Racine, at: 508-528-0020 or pastoralassociate@stmarysfranklin.org



Altar and Sanctuary Care

Members of the Altar & Sanctuary Care Ministry fill an essential and behind the scenes role in the preparation and celebration of the Eucharist at St. Mary's Parish. Please contact Cathy Pokorny at **508-346-3015** or cathyp@jhpokorny.net

Legion of Mary

Members bring the Eucharist for those in need including visiting parishioners in nursing homes and at home. Please call: 508-528-0020



Monday Night Rosary on Zoom with Deacon Guy

Deacon Guy offers the Rosary each Monday night via Zoom at 7:00pm. People (approx. 30) attend from many different parishes and towns. Each week we pray a different Mystery of the Rosary where volunteers lead each Mystery. Normally it takes about 30 minutes. All are welcome to attend! Contact Deacon Guy at deaconguy@verizon.net for more

info or go the Parish web site under *Parish Life* to find *Rosary via Zoom* page.