

The background image shows a priest in purple vestments performing a Mass at an ornate wooden altar. The altar features a large central statue of the Holy Family (Mary, Joseph, and Jesus) and two side statues of saints. A priest is visible on the right, holding a host and a chalice. The altar is decorated with flowers and candles. The magazine title 'ST JOSEPH' is overlaid in the top right, with a red cross symbol above the 'S'.

ISSUE 2 | NOVEMBER 2024  
**ST JOSEPH**

# ADVENT & CHRISTMAS!

**Meet New Staff**

**Advent Activities**

**Reconciliation Times**



## PARISH STAFF DIRECTORY

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**Phone:** [952-442-2384](tel:952-442-2384)

**Website:** [stjosephwaconia.org](http://stjosephwaconia.org) | [school.stjosephwaconia.org](http://school.stjosephwaconia.org)

**Mass Times:** Sat 5:15 pm, Sun 8:15 & 10:30 am, Mon. 6:30 pm, Tue-Wed 8:15 am, Fri 8:15 am

**Confession:** Sat 4:00 pm, Mon 5:30 pm

**Adoration:** Mon, Wed-Thur 5:00-9:00 pm, Tue 9:00 am - 9:00 pm

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# NOTE *from the* PASTOR

*Dear Parishioners,*

Welcome to our second quarterly newsletter. The first was to help launch the academic year; this is designed to promote Advent and Christmas. A third one in late February will help launch Lent and the Easter Seasons. All of them are to give us an opportunity to go more in-depth than we do with the weekly bulletin, and in turn, keep the weekly bulletin to four pages.

This is my seventh Advent as pastor of St. Joseph, and my 69<sup>th</sup> on Earth. I enjoy Advent more as I age as it encourages me to slow down and live in hopeful expectation, even as my duties increase. I have been listening to Advent music online to prepare. The haunting tones found in many Advent hymns with their prophetic and hopeful words calm me.

In Advent, we hear beautiful readings from Isaiah foretelling the signs of Emmanuel, the Messiah: the peaceful kingdom, the lame leaping, the blind with sight restored, the deaf hearing, and the mute speaking. In the New Testament, John the Baptist looms large as the forerunner of the Messiah. From his unlikely position in the desert, he challenges people to repent and gives simple advice on how to treat others. There is something compelling about him and his message, for people from all over go out to see him. We meet the young woman, Mary, who says yes to God's plan for her, and Elizabeth, her older cousin, who is carrying John the Baptist in her womb, and they share the Gospel message. We hear of other amazing births – Hannah giving birth to Samuel, and the birth of Samson. There is such hope. It reminds me of the saying that every child born is a reminder that God hasn't given up on us.

May your Advent be a time to prepare to encounter Jesus – not just as a baby but as Savior, Lord, and Redeemer who will return. Then celebrate Christmas, all nineteen days of it this year!

May the blessings of these weeks come upon you!



May God bless you,

*Fr. Stan Mader*

**Fr. Stan Mader**  
Pastor

# Meet Our New STAFF

**SHELIA WALD,**  
PARISH OFFICE COORDINATOR



**What are you excited for about working at St. Joseph?**

I am excited to be able to work with others who share the same faith as me. Also, for the opportunity to grow in my Catholic faith.

**What is your favorite part of Mass?**

My favorite part of Mass is the Holy Eucharist, where we get to experience the presence of our Lord.

**What would you choose to do if money was not a concern?**

If money was of no concern, I would travel. I find it interesting to learn about different places and cultures.

**If you could meet one person, living or dead, who would you choose?**

I would either choose Mother Teresa or Princess Diana. They both tried to make a difference in this world through their charity and mission work.

**What food would you choose if you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life?**

I would probably choose chocolate!

**Favorite scripture or quote:**

My favorite quote is by Padre Pio "Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer."



**RACHEL PROVENCE,**  
FINANCE MANGER



**What are you excited for about working at St. Joseph?**

As an alum of St. Joseph's school, I am glad to be a part of the community again. I am also excited to be working with a great group of people!

**What is your favorite part of Mass?**

My favorite parts of the Mass are Communion and the Sign of Peace.

**What would you choose to do if money was not a concern?**

If money was not a concern I would love to travel and immerse myself in other cultures by living in different countries for a while. It would also be fun to be able to check out expensive hobbies that I otherwise wouldn't do.

**If you could meet one person, living or dead, who would you choose?**

This answer is hard to narrow down, but I would choose the painter, Georgia O'Keefe. I love her work but am intrigued by the life she built for herself in New Mexico.

**What food would you choose if you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life?**

It would be a toss-up between steak and French fries, and a good BLT with corn on the cob in the summer.

**Favorite scripture or quote:**

"We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love."  
(St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta)



## St. Joseph Little Saints Preschool

On Thursday, November 14, St. Joseph Catholic STEM School hosted more than 40 families for the first annual Tiny Steps, Big Futures Night. The event was a resounding success, showcasing the launch of our new preschool program: St. Joseph Little Saints Preschool.

Starting next academic year, St. Joseph Little Saints Preschool will bring our youngest learners back under the St. Joseph wing. For over a decade, our preschool program was operated by Lake Area Discovery Center, a third-party provider. Now, by bringing preschool in-house, we gain greater flexibility to incorporate Catholic teachings, foster a stronger sense of community for learners from toddlers to teens, and integrate STEM learning for little hands and curious minds.

As we continue our commitment to exceptional education and faith formation, we invite families interested in Preschool through K-8 to learn more.

For inquiries, please contact Tim Jantzen,  
Director of Advancement and Enrollment, by emailing  
[tjantzen@stjosephwaconia.org](mailto:tjantzen@stjosephwaconia.org) or call [952-442-3717](tel:952-442-3717).

# ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC STEM SCHOOL

*Cultivating Faith, Excellence, & Innovation*

At St. Joseph Catholic STEM School, our mission is to inspire and empower each child to become the person God intends them to be. As a Nationally Certified STEM School by the National Institute for STEM Education, our preK-8<sup>th</sup> grade program integrates Catholic virtues with rigorous academics and cutting-edge STEM learning. Students here are encouraged to explore, question, and engage in hands-on learning that strengthens critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration—all essential skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We invite you to “Be a Saint Today!” and join our vibrant community where students are immersed in faith, service, and innovation. The heart of our work is to cultivate excellence in every student, guiding young people in their search for meaning and purpose, ultimately found in God. Through faith-based teaching, 21<sup>st</sup>-century instruction, and community involvement, we provide a learning experience that reaches the entire family.



## Top 10 Reasons to Choose St. Joseph Catholic STEM School

### 1) Our Mission

Our mission is to help your family get to Heaven! We integrate Catholic virtues, prayers, and service with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning to empower all learners. Our tagline says it best: Take a closer step to Heaven, and don't go alone!

### 2) Our SmartLab

As a leading C-STEM school in the Archdiocese, we have a one-of-a-kind STEM Learning Environment called our SmartLab which is led by a dedicated STEM Curriculum Specialist, where students dive into hands-on learning experiences.

### 3) Our Nurturing Community

We foster a welcoming, supportive environment that celebrates each child's unique strengths. Families find opportunities for hospitality and involvement that enrich our community.

### 4) Believe and Read Program

Since 2019, we've partnered with Groves Academy through the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence, providing extra literacy resources for K-3 students and specialized literacy training for teachers.

### 5) Small Class Sizes

With an average of 18 students per class, each student receives one-on-one time with teachers, supporting a personalized education.



### 6) Our Growing Community

Our enrollment is poised for growth, reflecting the vibrant appeal and positive impact of our school within the expanding Waconia area.

### 7) Extensive Extracurricular Programs

From Middle School Math League and Robotics to Theater and Athletics, our K-8 students enjoy a variety of activities, with 99% participating in at least one.

### 8) Our “Peace of Mind” Mindset

In partnership with the Twin Cities-based Phoenix School Counseling and the CSCOE-sponsored “Peace of Mind” program, we provide mental health and wellness resources, including a customized curriculum, on-site counselors, and webinars for parents and educators.

### 9) Accessible Tuition

We believe in making Catholic education affordable for every family, offering flexible payment plans and scholarships. With 45% of our families receiving tuition aid, we ensure that cost is never a barrier. Learn more at [school.stjosephwaconia.org/tuition](http://school.stjosephwaconia.org/tuition).

### 10) Catholic Values and STEM Excellence

With our C-STEM curriculum and deeply rooted Catholic identity, St. Joseph uniquely prepares

students for a future of faith-filled leadership and meaningful problem-solving.

### Special Opportunity for New Families

For the 2025-26 school year, new K-8 families are eligible for a \$3,000 discount per child upon registration—a unique chance to join a community where faith, innovation, and academic excellence meet.

Visit St. Joseph Catholic STEM School and experience how we nurture future leaders with the heart, skills, and wisdom to positively impact the world. Schedule a tour today by calling [952-442-4500](tel:952-442-4500) or visit our website at [school.stjosephwaconia.org](http://school.stjosephwaconia.org) to learn more.

*Take a closer step to Heaven with us!*



**Deacon Bruce Richards**  
Head of School





## *A Season of Expectation & Preparation*

**ADVENT: DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 23**

Advent is a season of both expectation and preparation, inviting us to anticipate the coming of Christ with joy and hope while preparing our hearts to receive Him. Expectation, in the Christian sense, is not a passive waiting but an active trust in God's promises. We are called to have a confident faith that the Lord is indeed coming—both at Christmas, when we celebrate His first coming in the Incarnation, and at the end of time when He will come again in glory.

The spirit of expectation is woven into the very fabric of Advent, and it reflects a deep, abiding trust in God. Listen in the readings this Advent as we are reminded of the urgency and joy of this expectation. The first Sunday of Advent features the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus speaks of His return: "Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). This is a call to alertness and faith, to expect His coming with confident hearts and to trust that God's plan is unfolding, even when we cannot see it fully.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux reflects beautifully on this

dual expectation of Christ. He speaks of the "three comings" of Christ: His first coming in Bethlehem, His second coming at the end of time, and His third coming into our hearts daily. He writes, "In the first coming, He was seen on earth and dwelt among men; in the final coming, all flesh will see the salvation of our God, and they will look on Him whom they have pierced. The intermediate coming is a hidden one; in it only the elect see the Lord within their own selves, and they are saved."

Alongside the expectation of Christ's coming, Advent is a season of preparation. This preparation is both internal and external—readying our souls, our families, and our communities to encounter God in the person of Jesus Christ.

We hear John the Baptist's call to "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" (Luke 3:4). Just as the people of Israel were called to repentance and renewal, so too are we urged to examine our lives and make room for Christ. Advent is a time to deepen our prayer life, frequent the Sacraments, especially Reconciliation, and ask God to cleanse our hearts of anything that might hinder His arrival.



*A Season of Expectation & Preparation continued...*

St. Teresa of Avila encourages us in this preparation: "Christ has no body now on earth but yours. No hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out to the world; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now." Advent invites us not only to prepare ourselves spiritually but to serve others, particularly the poor and vulnerable, through acts of charity and love.

Advent also calls us to prepare our families and communities to encounter Christ. As we light the candles of the Advent wreath, we can reflect together on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love, asking how we can make these virtues more present in our homes and in our relationships. The second reading of the First Sunday of Advent from 1 Thessalonians says, "May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all" (1 Thessalonians 3:12). In this spirit, we are called to cultivate a spirit of love and anticipation in our homes and to build communities that reflect the light of Christ.

St. Francis of Assisi, who lived a life of radical simplicity and preparation for the Lord, said, "While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart." This Advent, let us ensure that the peace of Christ reigns in our families and communities, as we prepare to celebrate the Prince of Peace.

Advent is a gift, a time to grow in trust and readiness. We expect the coming of Christ, not only in history or at the end of time but here and now, in the midst of our lives. Let us prepare our hearts and homes, making straight the paths for the Lord. In doing so, we will be ready to welcome Jesus into our lives with joy, not only on Christmas but every day.

As St. Augustine encourages, "Let us not resist the first coming, so that we may not dread the second." May we embrace this Advent season with faith, hope, and love, preparing ourselves for the joyful encounter with Christ, our Savior.



# CONFESSION

during ADVENT

Advent is a season of hope and preparation, making it a perfect time to experience the healing grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Confessions are heard in the church confessional, located across from the Divine Mercy Image and the Pietà near the side entrance at the front of the sanctuary.

Through confession, we open our hearts to God's mercy, receive forgiveness for our sins, and renew our relationship with Him. This sacred time allows us to reflect, repent, and prepare spiritually for the celebration of Christ's birth. Make time this Advent to encounter God's love and peace in a profound way.

## CONFESSION TIMES

Monday at 5:30 pm  
Saturday at 4:00 pm

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*"I am He who  
blots out your  
transgressions  
for my own sake,  
and I will  
not remember  
your sins."*

Isaiah 43:25

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## ADDITIONAL *Confession* TIMES DURING ADVENT

**Dec 14** - 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**Dec 20** - 9:00 am - 10:00 am

**Dec 21** - 9:00 am - 10:00 am  
& 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

RECONCILIATION SERVICE  
**December 22 at 4:00 pm**

**Dec 23** - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

## *Advent* 2024 Reconciliation Services

**December 5** from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
ST. HUBERT'S IN CHANHASSEN

**December 8** at 4:00 pm  
GUARDIAN ANGELS IN CHASKA

**December 10** at 7:00 pm  
ST. BATHOLOMEW IN WAYZATA

**December 10** from 7:15 pm - 8:45 pm  
OUR LADY OF THE LAKE IN MOUND

**December 14** from  
8:30 am - 2:00 pm & 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm  
ST. MARK'S CHURCH IN SHAKOPEE

**December 18** from 5:45 pm - 8:00 pm  
HOLY NAME OF JESUS IN WAYZATA

**December 19** from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
ST. THERESE IN DEEPHAVEN

**December 22** from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm  
ST. JOSEPH IN WACONIA

# *Celebrating the* **NATIVITY of OUR LORD**

## *Christmas Mass Times*

Join us this Christmas to celebrate the birth of our Savior at our beautiful Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses.

### **CHRISTMAS EVE MASS**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

3:00 pm, 5:30 pm, and  
10:00 pm (*Candlelight Vigil Mass*)

On Christmas Eve, experience the wonder of Christ's birth through the warmth of community and prayer. Our 10:00 pm Candlelight Vigil Mass offers a peaceful, reverent way to welcome Christmas, with the soft glow of candles illuminating the joy and hope that Christ brings to the world.

### **CHRISTMAS DAY MASS**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25**

8:30 am & 10:30 am

On Christmas Day, continue the celebration with morning Masses filled with joyful music and prayer, giving thanks for the miracle of Christ's birth.

We invite you to gather with family and friends for these beautiful liturgies as we rejoice in the greatest gift of all – the love of Christ, born to us this Christmas!



# Looking Ahead

On the next two pages, you'll get a glimpse of the exciting events and activities coming up over the next few months at St. Joseph. From community gatherings to special celebrations, there's something for everyone. Be sure to keep an eye on the bulletin and our website for the most up-to-date information and additional events that may be added to the calendar. We don't want you to miss out on any of the opportunities to connect, grow, and participate in our vibrant parish life!

## INFANCY NARRATIVE

December 2, 9 & 16 at 7:00 pm  
*in the Parish Center*



Join Fr. Stan for a 3-part Advent program in a small group setting that will be exploring the history, theology, and key moments of the first Christmas through Scripture, including the nativity stories in Luke and Matthew, plus Old Testament parallels like Isaac, Samson, and Samuel.

## DECEMBER 3

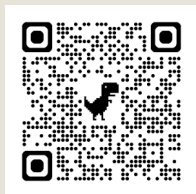
Spirit of Winter:  
*St. Joseph Night*



Plan to come to Sovereign Estates Winery for their Spirit of Winter Festival of Lights. This enchanting night is family friendly. Proceeds from ticket sales purchased online by scanning the QR Code will benefit the school!

## DECEMBER 6

Winter Outer Wear Event



If you need winter outerwear, visit St. Joseph Catholic Church on December 6 from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm. No registration is required! Volunteers are also welcome to help during the event. Come join us!

## DECEMBER 8

Cookie Decorating



Join the Women of Joy to decorate sugar cookies on December 8 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the School Commons. Open to First graders (*with a parent*) and older. RSVP by December 4 with the number of dozen cookies you'd like to decorate. Cost is \$8 per dozen, payable at the event.

## DECEMBER 9

Immaculate Conception  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mass at 6:30 pm

*Obligation has been dispensed  
by Archbishop Hebda for this year.*



The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception celebrates Mary, conceived without sin, as God's perfect vessel to bear Christ. Attending Mass honors her unique role in salvation and invites us to reflect on God's grace in our own lives.

## DECEMBER 13

Family Advent Fair



Join us on December 13 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm for the Family Advent Fair! Enjoy crafts, games, holiday treats, and a tree lighting ceremony. Plus, don't miss a special visit from St. Nicholas. Celebrate the joy of Advent with family and friends!

## DECEMBER 15

Christmas Parade



Spread Christmas joy with a festive car parade! Decorate your vehicle and join us on Sunday, December 15 at 12:45 pm as we bring holiday cheer to Waconia's senior living facilities. Sign-up required—space is limited to 25 vehicles, so don't wait!

## DECEMBER 22

Advent Reconciliation Service  
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm



The Advent Reconciliation Service on Sunday, December 22, from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. This is a wonderful opportunity to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ by seeking forgiveness and experiencing the peace of God's mercy.

## DECEMBER 24-25

Christmas Eve Mass:  
3:00 pm, 5:30 pm &  
10:00 pm (*Candlelight*)

Christmas Day Mass:  
8:30 am & 10:30 am



Celebrate the joy of Christmas with us as we come together to honor the birth of our Savior. We invite you to choose a Mass time on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to celebrate this Holy Day.

# Prayer & Adoration Opportunities



## **EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION WITH BENEDICTION**

December 8, 15 & 22

Eucharistic Adoration offers a special time for reflection and prayer, and ending it with Benediction adds an extra layer of reverence. Please join us on Fridays during Advent to celebrate Mass at 8:15 am. Adoration will begin at 9:00 am and conclude with Benediction at 10:00 am.



## **MORNING PRAYER**

Monday through Friday During Advent

A beautiful way to start the day during Advent is with Morning Prayer. The Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning Prayer, offers a structured and reflective way to begin the day with readings, psalms, and prayers that are deeply rooted in Catholic tradition.

Join us weekdays during advent in the Chapel in the lower level of the church at 7:00 am. Resources will be provided for everyone attending.



## *Taizé* PRAYER SERVICE

The Taizé prayer service is especially meaningful during Advent as it offers a peaceful, contemplative space to prepare for the coming of Christ. In the midst of a busy season, the quiet atmosphere, candle-lit surroundings, and repetitive chants invite deep reflection on Advent's themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. This reflective environment encourages us to set aside the rush of daily life and make room for God's presence in our hearts, creating an atmosphere of stillness that allows for a personal encounter with our Lord.

Founded in the 1940s by Brother Roger in the village of Taizé, France, the Taizé community began as a place of reconciliation and peace during the upheaval of World War II. The ecumenical community developed a unique style of prayer through simple, repetitive chants and moments of silence, drawing Christians from around the world to worship together in unity.

The service's focus on silence and simple prayer aligns with the spirit of waiting and preparation that defines Advent. It provides a much-needed pause from holiday distractions, helping participants center their hearts on

God and grow in spiritual readiness. In these moments of quiet, we can contemplate the profound mystery of Christ's coming, both at Christmas and at the end of time. By praying in unity with others, Catholics can deepen their relationship with others in the community and with our God.

### **JOIN US IN THE CHURCH FOR TAIZÉ PRAYER ON:**

**Monday, December 2 at 8:00 pm**

**Tuesday, December 10 at 8:00 pm**

**Wednesday, December 18 at 6:00 pm**

**Friday, December 20 at 6:00 pm**

# Christkindlmarket

WHERE PROJECT BASED LEARNING, SERVICE  
& CHRISTMAS CHEER ALL MERGE INTO ONE!

This past week, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at St. Joseph C-STEM School began their preparations for hosting the annual celebration called Christkindlmarket. This project based learning unit began several years ago when the middle school staff decided that the area of study was “Starting Your Own Business” theme.

Teams of two to three students decide on a Christmas craft to create, promote, and sell. They write a basic business proposition with facts, figures and reasons why their item will be a “hot ticket” item this Christmas. Teams then create their supply list and a spreadsheet of how to price their item while earning a profit of at least 20%. Students will create an advertisement of their item to share with the rest of the school community, and when supplies arrive, their classroom is turned into “Santa’s Workshop” and all the items to sell are created by the students.

This project is a highlight of the year with not only the students who create the items, but with all the elementary students who come and shop at Christkindlmarket. The excitement of the smallest students at St. Joe’s being able to purchase Christmas gifts for their parents, siblings, and grandparents bring such joy to all! This year’s Christkindlmarket is scheduled on Wednesday, December 18 during the school day.



*Mrs. Amy Gallus*

**Amy Gallus**  
Principal

*Note: Photographs are from last year’s event preparations.*



# Welcome.<sup>CRHP 2.0</sup>

## There is More to Life

OVERNIGHT RETREAT FOR ADULTS AGES 18+

Are you new to the parish? Been around awhile but not sure where your place is? Have you been feeling lost and looking for a place to belong? We want to WELCOME you to our parish by joining our Men's and Women's retreats. During these weekends you will not only discover and grow your spiritual life, but you will connect with a group of catholic men and women that

will continue to support you and walk with you after the retreat. Some parishioners that have gone on this retreat are still meeting with their group 5 or more years later. As Catholics we are called to continuously build our relationship with Christ and to build our relationship with others and the WELCOME retreats are a great place to start your journey.

## MEN'S RETREAT: FEBRUARY 22-23

Saturday at 8:00 am - Sunday at 4:00 pm

**Questions?** Reach out to Matt Turek at [matthewturek59@gmail.com](mailto:matthewturek59@gmail.com).

## WOMEN'S RETREAT: MARCH 1-2

Saturday at 8:00 am - Sunday at 4:00 pm

**Questions?** Reach out to Janice Matlon at [jmatlon@stjosephwaconia.org](mailto:jmatlon@stjosephwaconia.org).



**REGISTER TODAY!**

**ST JOSEPH**  
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

STJOSEPHWACONIA.ORG | 41 EAST FIRST STREET, WACONIA, MN 55387



## *Ask the Deacon*

### WHO CAN GO TO HEAVEN

**Question:** Please help me to understand what Pope Francis meant when he said, “All religions are a path to heaven.” I thought people can only be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Answer:** On a recent trip to Singapore where Catholics make up about 3.5% of the population, in his concluding remarks Pope Francis said, “All religions are a path to God. They are like different languages in order to arrive at God, but God is God for all. Since God is God for all, then we are all children of God.”

related and it is from this premise that we come to understand the Brotherhood of Humankind.

Anthropologists, that is, those who study the human race, cultures and communities, all agree and conclude that there is something different about humans that differentiates them from the rest of the animal kingdom. They examine philosophical viewpoints such as, why does anything exist, where does nature, the sun, the moon and the stars come from, what is a person, why is there evil and suffering, what drives humans to succeed, and why are some humans compassionate while others are not?

Genesis continues to describe how humans are different from all other creatures and provides an explanation as

To help us better understand what Pope Francis was saying, we need to more fully understand the history of salvation and the mystery of the Incarnation. To do this, we need to start at the beginning, with the story of creation. According to Genesis, the first book of the Bible, God created Adam (a Hebrew word that means ‘first man’) and Eve, the mother of all the living, and from these the entire human race has descended. Based on this premise, all humans are

to why there is suffering in the world. Humans were created with both a body and a soul, and, according to the Bible, were created in the image and likeness of God. It is this idea that is used to explain the human ability to love and to choose. Unlike other animals that rely on instincts that dictate how they behave, humans can think and make choices. It is the belief that we have this free will and a capacity to love and be loved that links us to the one who

*Ask the Deacon continued...*

created us freely. He created us to be loving creatures whom he could love and, according to the prerequisite of loving relationships, who could love him in return. It is when the first humans turned away from God, based upon a choice they made, that suffering entered the world. Since then the story of salvation history has been based upon finding a way for the human race to return to God and to love him as we should.

The basis of Christianity is Jesus Christ. Christian anthropology examines the Christian understanding of the human person. According to *Gaudium et Spes*, one of the key documents of the 2nd Vatican Council, "The mystery of the human race only makes sense in the light of Christ" (GS 22). According to Christianity, God created all things from nothing. All creation depends on God. It acknowledges that the human person is made for communion with God, and that Christ is the image of God, and since we are made in the image and likeness of God, there is the image of Christ in each of us. We are therefore images of Christ. *Gaudium et Spes* goes on to say, "The person who strives to become more like Christ becomes more human" (GS 41). Accordingly, it is Christianity that provides the answer to what it is to be human.

As we approach the Advent and Christmas Seasons, the great feast of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, it might be a good time to reflect upon why Jesus assumed our human nature. According to Genesis, when man sinned, death entered the world. "The Lord God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die" (Gen 2:16-17). This first man, this Adam, represents the entire human race and our rejection of God's pure goodness. As Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, "Just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all" (Rom 5:12). In First Corinthians he writes, "Since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life" (1 Cor 15:20-22).

In the Gospel of John, right after explaining to Nicodemus the concept of being born again, and explaining that the Son of Man must be lifted up so

that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life, we read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3: 16-17). And after rising from the dead, just before he ascended into heaven, Jesus

From the earliest days of Christianity, Baptism was seen as a requirement for salvation. In Mark's version of the commissioning Jesus declares, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, and whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16-16). And in explaining what it meant to be born again, Jesus said to Nicodemus, "No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5).

commissioned his Apostles, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20).

Additionally, Jesus declares in what is commonly known as the "Bread of Life Discourse" in the Gospel of John that, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:54). And in his Last Supper Discourse Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Based on these scriptural passages, it is only natural and logical to conclude, that to be saved one must be baptized, believe in Jesus, and receive his body and blood in Holy Communion. This is what led to one of the early fathers of the Church, Saint Cyprian of Carthage (210-258 AD) to declare, "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus" that is, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," a statement that would be adopted by the Catholic Church and debated for centuries to come. And it is this very debate that

Pope Francis has stirred with the recent statements he made while visiting Singapore.

To fully understand the teachings of the Catholic Church and statements like this in particular, additional understanding is required. To fully understand the mysteries surrounding the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and the salvation of the human race requires us to first acknowledge the transcendence of God and his holy and infinite Wisdom, Justice and Mercy.

Another of the early Fathers of the Church, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386 AD) wrote about two types of faith. One kind of faith concerns doctrines based on the statements regarding Jesus and the sacraments stated above. In other words, if you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that God raised him from the dead, and you properly receive the sacraments, and live the life taught to you by the gospel message of loving God and neighbor, you will be saved and taken up to paradise by him.

But, according to Saint Cyril, who is a Doctor of the Church, the other kind of faith is given by Christ by means of a special grace. In describing this observation, he refers to the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit. There are different forms of service but the same Lord. There are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone" (1 Cor 12:-6). Elsewhere he explains why the Church is called Catholic, "Because it is spread through the whole world, from one end of the earth to the other, and because it never stops teaching in all its fullness every doctrine that men ought to be brought to know. It is also called Catholic because it brings into religious obedience every sort of men, rulers and ruled, learned and simple, and because it is a universal treatment and cure for every kind of sin" (Catechetical Lectures 18, 23).

All of this then begs the questions, "Who can be saved?" and "Who can go to heaven?" What about the holy men and women from the Old Testament, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, King David, and all the holy prophets? Are they in heaven? Have they been given the gift of eternal life even though none of them were baptized or ate the body and drank the blood of Jesus? What about all the millions

of people throughout the world and history who have never been proselytized and received into the faith? What happens to them?

One of the most obvious problems with the claim that there is "no salvation outside the Church," is that it seems unjust. In the case of those who have never heard about Christianity, how can their salvation depend upon faith plus baptism? Denying them salvation seems to be punishing them for something that is beyond their control.

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD), considered by many to be the greatest philosopher and theologian of the Catholic Church wrestled with these questions. It was apparent that many individuals

Why do we concern ourselves with questions such as this? Perhaps it is out of loving concern for those who we might presume will have no opportunity to go to heaven. After all, our Catholic faith does teach us that salvation is possible only through Jesus Christ. After considering the information above, perhaps we can arrive at a deeper understanding of why the Pope said what he did, especially in the context in which it was spoken.

were 'invincibly ignorant,' or in other words, 'who through no fault of their own,' were not familiar with the gospels and the saving deeds of Jesus Christ. Today, the Catechism of the Catholic Church upholds this position stating, "Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity" (CCC 1257-1260).

Singapore has a population of just over 6 million people of which 31% (1.9 Mil) are Buddhist, 19% (1.1Mil) are Christian, 16% (1 mil) are Muslim, 9% (500 k) practice Taoism, 5%(300 k) are Hindu and 20% (1.2 mil) claim to follow no religion at all. Included within the count of those who claim to be Christian is a population of 3.5% (210 k) Catholic. Despite the small number of Catholics who call

*Ask the Deacon continued...*

Singapore home, the crowds who gathered to see the Pope were vast, much greater than 210 thousand. Addressing these large crowds, Pope Francis exhorted them to engage in interfaith dialogue. To say that one religion is more important than others almost always leads to violence. He opened the doors to dialogue by saying, "There is only one God, and each of us has a language to arrive at God. Some are Sheik, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and they are different paths to God."

In today's world, with so many divisions and religions established throughout the world, a person is born into the family and culture into which they are born without much choice of how they will be raised or what they will be taught. Despite this, many persons live the best lives they can, observing their religious practices to the best of their abilities, remaining faithful and true to the God they were taught to believe in. They live their lives as God fearing individuals. There is an example of this kind of person described in the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles (see Acts Chapter 10). "Now in Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Cohort called the Italica, devout and God-fearing along with his whole household, who used to give alms generously to the Jewish people and pray to God constantly" (Acts 10:1-2) By the workings of the Holy Spirit, Cornelius sends for a man named Simon Peter. The Holy Spirit, meanwhile, was preparing Peter for this encounter. When Peter arrives on the scene and learns of Cornelius and his story, Peter says, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Our current Pope, Pope Francis appears to be working with the same wisdom as our first Pope.

As Catholics we are taught not to judge others, but to bear witness to our faith and let the light of Christ shine through us. Saint James in his epistle warns us, "The one who speaks ill of his brother or judges his brother is speaking against the law. It is the law he judges. If, however, you judge the law, you are no observer of the law, you are its judge. There is but one Lawgiver and Judge, one who can save and destroy. Who then are you to judge your neighbor" (James 4:11-12)? Instead, let us follow the call of Saint Peter, "Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you for the reason for the hope you have, but do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15), and, "Be solicitous to make you call and election permanent. Surely, those who do so will never be lost" (2 Peter 1:10). Let us

remember the words of Psalm 51, "O Lord open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. For in burnt sacrifice you take no delight. A burnt offering from me you would refuse. My sacrifice? A contrite spirit. A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn" (Psalm 51:17-19). We are called to be missionaries for Christ. This is what discipleship is all about.

What exactly did Pope Francis do in Singapore? He opened the door to mission by opening the door to dialogue. It is through dialogue that we can share the light of Christ that lives in each one of us. When we share this light, we can then pray with the psalmist, "Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly. My lips I have not sealed. You know it, O Lord. I have not hidden your righteousness in my heart, but told of your faithfulness. I have not hidden your love and your truth from the nations" (Psalm 40:10-11).

No matter what gifts we have been granted here on earth, whether the gospel message reached our ears or not, and regardless if we have lived the best possible life or not, the fact remains that the gates of heaven were opened to the entire human race through Jesus and the sacrifice he made for us. Thus, all those who are saved, are indeed saved through Jesus Christ, even those who were invincibly ignorant through no fault of their own while they lived on this earth. Only the true judge knows what lies within the hearts of men. We are all obliged to live our best.



# Sacraments

## INFORMATION

### BAPTISM

It is always a joyous occasion when a person is baptized into the Catholic faith. Baptism is a sacrament of initiation that is the first step in the Catholic faith and makes them a child of God.

Parents looking to have an infant baptized are asked to call the Parish Office at [952-442-2384](tel:952-442-2384) to arrange for this sacrament – you don't need to wait until your child is born!

If you are an adult or youth who wishes to be baptized, please contact Kirstin Bularzik at [952-442-3705](tel:952-442-3705) or [kbularzik@stjosephwaconia.org](mailto:kbularzik@stjosephwaconia.org).



### EUCCHARIST

We believe that Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. We receive Jesus in the Eucharist at Mass. St. Joseph invites families with children in second grade and older to prepare for the reception of First Holy Eucharist by attending weekly Mass and fully participating in Faith Formation classes and events. Your child is required to receive First Reconciliation before receiving First Holy Eucharist.

Please contact, Julie Loscheider at [952-442-3705](tel:952-442-3705) for more information.

If you are an adult who wishes to receive communion, please contact Kirstin Bularzik at [952-442-3705](tel:952-442-3705) or [kbularzik@stjosephwaconia.org](mailto:kbularzik@stjosephwaconia.org).



## MARRIAGE

The sacraments make Christ present in our midst. Like the other sacraments, marriage is not just for the good of individuals, or the couple, but for the community as a whole. The Old Testament prophets saw the marriage of a man and woman as a symbol of the covenant relationship between God and his people. The permanent and exclusive union between husband and wife mirrors the mutual commitment between God and his people. The Letter to the Ephesians says that this union is a symbol of the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Couples wishing to celebrate the sacrament of marriage at St. Joseph should be members of the parish or have family ties to the parish. It is recommended that couples begin preparing for this sacrament at least nine months before their intended wedding date.

Please contact Kirstin Bularzik if you are interested in receiving this sacrament by calling [952-442-3705](tel:952-442-3705) or [kbularzik@stjosephwaconia.org](mailto:kbularzik@stjosephwaconia.org)



## BECOMING CATHOLIC (OCIA)

Do you have questions about the Catholic faith? Would you like to join the Catholic Church? The Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA) is a process through which participants are invited to grow more deeply in their faith and join the Catholic Church.

Through this process, participants attend weekly sessions to help them learn about the Catholic faith and prepare to enter the Catholic Church.

If you are interested in OCIA, as a participant, or a volunteer, contact Kirstin Bularzik by calling at [952-442-3705](tel:952-442-3705).



# Pray the Rosary

## HOW TO GUIDE

- 1) Make the sign of the cross.
- 2) Pray the Apostle's Creed
- 3) Pray the Our Father
- 4) Pray a Hail Mary for each bead for the increase in the virtues of Faith, Hope & Charity
- 5) Pray a Glory Be, Fatima Prayer
- 6) Pray the Our Father. Announce the First Mystery.
- 7) Pray Ten Hail Mary's while meditating on the Mystery.
- 8) Pray a Glory Be, Fatima Prayer, and then the Our Father. Announce the next Mystery.
- 9) Repeat 7-8 until all five decades are complete.
- 10) After the final 10 Hail Mary's, pray the a Glory Be, Fatima Prayer and then the Hail Holy Queen.

