

THE VERNACULAR

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH



Wichita, Kansas

DECEMBER 2017

May you find joy this Christmas season

There is something about a baby. Having a newborn in the home truly brings us a bundle of joy. Sure, they are loud, a little messy and can wreck any concept of a schedule. But a baby also brings hope, amazement and unmatched joy.

We had a new baby in our home last Christmas, a new grandson. It really doesn't matter whether it is one of your own, a niece or nephew, grandchild or even a great grandchild; nothing brings joy to a home like a new infant or toddler this time of year.

We revel in their sense of wonder. We marvel at their features. (Does a baby really look like Uncle Harry or Grandma Joan?) There is something about a baby that helps us all recall

what joy is supposed to look and feel like.

That image of a newborn resonated with me this year as I prepared for the Joy of Christmas. Jesus resting in his mother's arms is the picture of joy. It is a reminder to all of us that our Savior was born. He came into this world to



bring us hope and to change our world.

As I look back on our last year as a parish family, I am filled with much joy. We gave birth to the Faith Forward process and started looking ahead as a parish. There were challenges, losses and struggles, but there was also joy.

With Mass at least twice each

weekday, weekend Masses, weddings, funerals and other celebrations, our little parish in West Wichita offered Mass nearly 1,000 times in 2017!

That is a cause for celebration. The Eucharist is the reason for our joy.

As the calendar year comes to a close, may you find joy in your life. I know my babies, who are mostly grown, bring me great joy. May you find joy this Christmas season in the celebration of the birth of our Savior. May He fill your home with unmatched joy.

As the song says, "Joy to the World, the Lord has come." Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us here on the parish staff.

– Pat Burns, Director of Stewardship & Finance



Drawing by Scott S.

PSR Art

Father Jarrod asked SFA's PSR second graders to provide artwork for this issue of the Vernacular. In addition to this one, see page 5 for more Christmas drawings created by the children.

UPCOMING EVENTS

St. Therese Girls Club Spaghetti Dinner

Jan. 14, 10:45 a.m. - 6 p.m.

St. Clare Hall

Parish Leadership Training

Jan. 20, 9-11 a.m., St. Clare Hall

Eucharistic Procession, followed by Adoration hymns

Jan. 29, following 8 a.m. Mass Church & School Gym

Ministry reaches youth from multiple schools

Man, I wish you all could see us on Wednesday night! The Holy Spirit is moving so profoundly in the youth room! So many kids are coming out of the woodwork to spend time with one another, pray to the Lord, get formed in their faith, and most recently, stuff their faces with pie.

Fr. Jarrod has told me that parishioners were hoping that CYM would reach all the schools which our St. Francis students are attending. I want you to know that we have youth from Maize, Maize South and Northwest high schools coming on Wednesday nights, and we are seeing

an increase in home school students and Bishop Carroll students too. Pray for us.

We are blessed to be the youth of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish. Amen.
– Emily Savage, Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries



Photo by Emily Savage

CYM Winter Schedule

January 2018

- 3 • Swing Dancing • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room
- 7 • Coffee & Rolls • 9:30 a.m. - noon • Walkway
- 10 • Holy Hour & Benediction • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room
- 16-21 • March for Life
- 17 • Pro-Life Rosary • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room
- 24 • Open Gym • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room
- 31 • Living Virtue - Breakout Sessions • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room

February 2018

- 7 • Pizza Party & Games • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room
- 11 • Coffee & Rolls • 9:30 a.m.- noon • Walkway
- 14 • Ash Wednesday • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room
- 17-19 • Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) Retreat • Spiritual Life Center
- 21 • Night Prayer & Mass with God Squad • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room
- 25 • Coffee & Rolls • 9:30 a.m. - noon • Walkway
- 28 • Warming Souls Service Project • 8-9:30 p.m. • CYM Room

My Christmas, New Year's wish for you

It is always a magnificent sight to see sunrays radiating through clouds over the Flint Hills. Not only do you have the vibrant reds, oranges and yellows; but when those are contrasted with the sky, you can also see hues of blue, green and even purple. The sunrays, breaking through the clouds, shine down upon the earth like various shafts of light piercing the ground.

Such a Kansas sky is especially moving when those shafts of light feel like they are directed at you. In my mind, that is what I imagine God's blessings to look like – sunrays, breaking through the clouds of life, radiating down upon the soul.

This is my Christmas and New Year's wish for you: That the Love of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, can break through the clouds of life and flood you and your family with the light of the Holy Spirit.

To this day, priests use this ancient blessing from the Scriptures (Num 6:24-26):

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May he let his face shine upon you and show you his mercy.

May he turn his countenance towards you and give you his peace.

Isn't this a beautiful blessing? As the sun shines down upon the earth; so, too, I pray that the face of the Lord shines upon you. As you celebrate this Christmas season and prepare yourself for the New Year, I pray that God's blessings burst forth from the highest



heavens and flood you with joy, peace, contentment and life.

New Year's Spiritual Tradition

As a sort of Christmas gift, I want share with you a special tradition within the Church on New Year's Eve. The Church has a hymn called the *Te*



Photo by Rick Reitmeyer

Deum that is sung on all the Church's highest feasts. Most Catholics know this hymn as "*Holy God, We Praise Thy Name*," which is normally sung at the end of adoration.

The Church teaches, "A plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful who devoutly assist either at a recitation or a solemn singing of the *Te Deum*, on the final day of the year, to offer thanks to God for gifts received throughout the course of the entire year."

I encourage you to either sing or say this hymn with your family on New Year's Eve to receive such great graces.

Here are all the translated verses of the *Te Deum*:

1. Holy God, we praise Thy Name; Lord of all, we bow before Thee! All on earth Thy scepter claim; all in Heaven above adore Thee; infinite Thy vast domain, everlasting is Thy reign.

2. Hark! The loud celestial hymn angel choirs above are raising; cherubim and seraphim, in unceasing chorus praising; fill the heavens with sweet accord: Holy, holy, holy, Lord.

3. Lo! The apostolic train; join the sacred name to hallow; prophets swell the loud refrain, and the white robed martyrs follow; and from morn to set of sun, through the Church the song goes on.

4. Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit, three we name Thee; while in essence only One, undivided God we claim Thee; and adoring bend the knee, while we own the mystery.

5. Thou art King of glory, Christ: Son of God, yet born of Mary; for us sinners sacrificed, and to death a tributary: First to break the bars of death, Thou has opened Heaven to faith.

6. From Thy high celestial home, judge of all, again returning; we believe that Thou shalt come in the dreaded doomsday morning; when Thy voice shall shake the earth, and the startled dead come forth.

7. Therefore, do we pray Thee, Lord: Help Thy servants whom, redeeming by Thy precious blood out-poured, Thou hast saved from Satan's scheming. Give to them eternal rest in the glory of the blest.

8. Spare Thy people, Lord, we pray, by a thousand snares surrounded: Keep us without sin today; never let us be confounded.

9. Lo, I put my trust in Thee; never, Lord, abandon me.

Birth of Jesus brings love, light, hope, joy

Christmas cards and yard displays proclaim Love! Light! Hope! Joy! Cynics point out that these words are co-opted by commercial interests to encourage people to buy gifts as part of the “reason for the season.” Others claim that Christmas is about a vague sense of giving.

We can only fully understand Christmas when we know where we came from and where we are headed.

The plan of God is that all people share a cosmic communion of love. This patient plan began with the words, “*Let there be light.*” (Gen. 1:3) Almost immediately, the darkness of sin obscured human intellect and will. The loss of light caused discord between man and his God, between man and woman, and between man

and creation.

But our loving God, not to be thwarted, promised a return of the light in Genesis 3:15, where a promised offspring would strike at the head of evil.

The Hebrews eagerly looked for signs of this promise’s fulfillment, especially in times of darkness. God sent prophets to encourage **hope** for the coming light in these discouraged people. The most prolific prophet stated, “*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.*” (Isaiah 9:1)

The Jews surrounding Jesus wondered if this time of light was upon them. His astounding and clear answer: “*I am the light of the world.*” (John 8:12) As Isaiah had proclaimed, this was cause for “*abundant joy and great rejoicing*”! (Isaiah 9:2) Thousands of years of expectation were fulfilled when Light entered the world at Christmas.

Mary was the first to receive news of the Messiah. She, to a greater degree than any other, possessed the light and life of God. What was her first action when she received this unimaginable gift? She shared it with her cousin.

Imagine the mutual joy of those two

women, knowing the fulfillment of the millennia-old promise was at hand!

We also live in the time of the Light. We know that the promise is being fulfilled. We live at the time of Redemption, which also means that we can participate in Christ’s salvific work. How?

Our baptismal candles were lit from the Paschal candle, representing the Light. This Light died 2,000 years ago, but was enflamed once more at the Resurrection, never to die again. This is the Light we share through our baptism: Light that will never falter.

Like Mary, we possess this Light and this life. We, like Mary, can share it. We can participate in God’s loving plan of cosmic communion by spreading the Light to all people of all times until “*God will be all in all.*” (1 Cor. 15:28)

This is the meaning of Christmas. We, who have received the greatest gift, the gift of Light and of hope, are privileged to share it, with the joy that naturally accompanies such a remarkable message.

This meditation is based on the themes developed in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

– Cheryl Rundle

NEW PARISHIONERS

Molly Bogner

Barbara Finlayson

Angus Morgan

Marcy Pentz, 1 child

Maria Perez

Riley Rathbun

Emily Simon

Matthew and Lindsay Weller,

2 children

BAPTISMS

Koleman Francis, son of Ryan and Angela Graf, on Nov. 3

Levi Benjamin, son of Matthew and Emily Robertson, on Nov. 4

Penelope Esperanza, daughter of Diego and Diana Tovar, on Nov. 5

Lindsey Jordan, daughter of Kyle and Jenna Loomis, on Nov. 19

Dawsen Avery, son of Tyler and Megan Lopez, on Nov. 19

Eli Dominic, son of Matthew and Rose Manning, on Nov. 26

Simon Peter, son of Augustine and Bianca Iacopelli, on Nov. 26

Stewardship Thought

“There is nothing we have; nothing; that is not a gift. Everything we are and everything we have is founded in the loving generosity of the Creator. When we know this, not just in our minds but in the depths of our hearts, then life takes on a whole new meaning. Then we have a whole different perspective about our time or our talents or our treasure, our bodies, our minds, hearts – everything that we are and everything that we have – takes on a completely different perspective.”

– Bishop Carl A. Kemme

Merry Christmas from PSR 2nd graders



Drawing by Jessica D.



Drawing by Kassandra K.



Drawing by Colton T.



Drawing by Peyton W.



Drawing by Maggie C.



Drawing by Thyra V.



Drawing by Janelle S



Photo by Crystal Iseman

The 2nd grade SFA Little Flowers group displays some of the 100 Christmas cards they made to give to residents of local nursing homes.

Letter of thanks arrives from teen in India

We are all one body in Christ. As our Compassion without Borders initiative gets started here at St. Francis, I wanted to share with you this letter from Kavitha, an 18-year-old living in India, forwarded to us by Fr. Kiran Kumar Medipalli.

...

I am Kavitha. I am studying B. Tech 1st year. My mom died when I was 6 years old, and my dad abandoned us.

I grew under the care of my widowed grandmother, who is bedridden now. I have an older brother who is 22 years old, but he dropped out of school, and I do not know where he lives or what he does for a living. I also have a younger brother who is 15 years old and is living at home and studying in the 8th class.

Thanks be to God, for he has blessed us with my mom's sister. She takes care of us. She is a single mother and her son is studying in

the 7th class. She lives in utter poverty, but she is generous to us. She works in a small dispensary and struggles to meet her expenses. Unfortunately, she is HIV positive.

In the picture, you can see me, my aunt's son, my bedridden grandmother and my aunt.

Thanks to the awesome God, for He sends his beloved servants and takes care of us. I thank Father Kiran Kumar Medipalli for helping our family.

Please pray for us. God's blessings!



...

We are all one body in Christ.

Jesus' message is one He hammered home every time He spoke. Love one another. Love, love, love ... so, it must be pretty important. We are ALL one body in Jesus Christ. The only thing that separates us right now is distance. And before you know it, that too will be gone.

In teaching us what that love looks like, His words also included phrases like, "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me."

So, what does this ask of us as good stewards at St. Francis Parish, we members who share our time, talent and treasure? To meet our brother at his level of need.

The one thing Kavitha specifically asked for is the one thing she identified and recognized first. Prayer. I think we can do that, don't you?

— Michael Pearson

Cub Scout Pancake Feed



Photos by Sean Beebe



We mustache you
to come join the
St. Therese Girls Club

SPAGHETTI

DINNER

FUNDRAISER

SUNDAY

JANUARY

14

2018

10:45 AM

TO

6:00 PM





May the Lord shine upon you!

“May the Lord smile upon you and give you peace”

Numbers 6:25-26

A Season for Joy
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Christmas, New Year’s Wish
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