

## World Day of Prayer for Vocations Four steps to hearing your call

Throughout the ages, people have struggled to understand God's call to them. Four basic steps of discernment—becoming aware, gathering information, making a decision, and looking for confirmation of your choice—can help. How do you hear God's call in your lives? How do you understand what you hear?

These questions have been asked throughout the ages and continue to be asked by all who seek to discern God's presence and call in their lives. If you look at scripture, you find several examples of people struggling to understand God's call to them.

Consider the story of the call of Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-10). Samuel was a young boy serving in the temple when he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed this voice was that of the priest, Eli. Eventually, Eli realized that Samuel was hearing God's voice calling to him and instructed him to respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel needed Eli to tell him that the voice he heard was God's. He didn't recognize God's voice on his own.

Or consider the story of Andrew and the other disciple when they were with John the Baptist. John sees Jesus walking by and points out, "Behold the Lamb of God." With that the two disciples of John follow after Jesus and become his disciples (John 1:35-40). They needed John the Baptist to point out Jesus to them. Then, they could follow and respond.

When you seek to discover God's call in your lives you enter a time of discernment. The dictionary defines discern as: to separate, to sort out, to sift through. Discernment, then, is a time of sifting and sorting. Religious discernment is also a time to see with the eyes of your heart so that you can choose life in God. It is a time when you allow yourselves to be open to God's will, and it is an opportunity to allow your hearts to guide your mind more than only trusting your own reasoning.

### What do you hear?

While discernment has many parts, I would like to suggest four basic steps in any time of discovering one's vocation. The first is a call to become aware. You are called to listen to God, to yourselves, and to those around you.

If you are to listen to God, then prayer is essential. You need to take time to be in conversation with God, to ask God for help and guidance. You have only to look to the life of Jesus to see the prominent place of prayer in discernment. As you read the gospels you find that before every major decision Jesus went off alone to pray. He did this prior to choosing the 12 apostles, and he spent much time in prayer as he prepared for his Passion and death.

While you need time alone, you also can find God's voice in the voices of those around you. Your call is not for you alone. While you may grow personally and your relationship with God may develop as a result of your call, your vocation is always a call for others, a call to be of service to others, a call to pray for others.

Gail, a young woman considering religious life, says, "Without the voices of others, I know I would not be where I am today in my spiritual process. God has sent me 'voices' throughout my life, people that I may have only known for a short time and others whom I have known for a long while. I feel so alive and filled with love when we have spiritual talks. It is their voices echoing mine that bring light and peace into my life."

### What do you need to know?

The second step in discovering your vocation is to gather information and investigate the many options in front of you. Nicole says, "As I discern God's call in my life, I find that the perspective and input from people who know me in a vast array of settings helps

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## Four Steps to Hearing Your Call

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to gain deeper insight and self-knowledge. For each person whose life path has connected with my own, I have been enlightened to my weaknesses as well as uncovered some of my hidden strengths.”

Discerning a call to religious life is a two-way street. It calls for mutual discernment—on the part of the individual as well as the community. Just as with marriage, entering a religious community involves two parties, and both are called to be open and honest in order to discern if God is calling someone to join this particular community or not.

During this step it can be extremely helpful to have a spiritual director, someone with whom you can share your prayer, your relationship with God, your questions, and your fears. A spiritual director can help you sort and sift and discover where God may be leading you. Jennifer recalls how her own spiritual director has helped her and challenged her in her discernment of a vocation: “My spiritual director introduced me to communities that I would not have necessarily visited and to new ways of praying and worshipping our God. He encouraged me and pushed me out of my comfort zone to truly be what God had created me to be. He has helped me to be the best ‘me’ I could be.”

If you are discerning a call to a particular community, part of this step involves conversing with the community’s vocation director. “It is a real blessing to find a vocation director whose only agenda is to listen and to help you listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit within you and the respective community,” Hillary says. “One such vocation director I met with really helped me to probe both myself and the life which I was discerning. She never pushed me one way or the other, but through many visits and conversations, I found plenty of affirmation and encouragement to stay open to this calling.”

### Where is God leading you?

Discernment calls for patience on all our parts. There is usually not a quick answer to the various questions posed. You need to take time to pay attention to the Spirit’s movements within you. Eventually though, you do need to choose—to make a decision. This is the third step of discernment.

This step calls you to choose what you sense to be God’s will as you can best understand it at this moment. You can’t expect your decisions to be always right or that you will be 100 percent certain when you do make your decision. Rather, you are called simply to make the decision that you believe will lead you to become the most loving person you can be, to become the person God created you to be.

### What happens now?

The fourth step of discernment follows this time of making a choice, and it is a critical step in the process. You look for confirmation of your choice. While prayer needs to be an element throughout the process, it is vital during this time. You have made a decision.

While some may support you in your choice, you may also encounter those who disagree with your decision and try to persuade you to do otherwise. At these moments it is important to pay attention to what happens within you. Do you find your choice weakening, or do you find it strengthened, even in the face of adversity? Sometimes such negative reactions actually can help strengthen your resolve.

If, however, after making a choice, you find yourself feeling more and more uneasy or even get sick physically, you may need to look more deeply again. Is this a simple case of the “jitters”? Or is your body trying to tell you that you’ve not made a good choice? Again, at such moments, the guidance of a spiritual director is imperative. A lack of confirmation may be a call to reconsider my choice. Such a time of reconsideration may, then, lead me to a different choice. Or it could simply point out some areas in which I’ll need to find extra support as I continue living out my previous decision.

Lynn is a member of a large family and has a grown son herself. She recently told her family that she is considering a call to religious life. She said, “My son was surprised. But over time he seems to be OK. My father is a good old Irishman who just couldn’t contain his pride. . . . My mother is not so happy about this at all. . . . She can’t see, as I do, that everything I’d be doing as a sister would be by choice and would make me happy; that it wouldn’t be a sacrifice. . . . I have told some of my close friends [because] I really needed to do so. . . . Most of them don’t understand it at all. But they are so supportive and see it makes me happy. Most of them have the same questions that I’ve already asked. That’s great, because it gives me a second chance to talk about my own concerns.”

While discernment requires that you spend time alone in prayer and conversation with God, you also need other people to help you sort out the fruits of your prayer, to help show you the way to follow God’s call. As members of the body of Christ, you need one another to uncover your talents and abilities. You need the other members of the body to assist you on your journey and, at times, to show you the way. We are all members of a community, a family of faith. Your discernment in life, therefore, leads you naturally into that community, not away from it. God uses those around you to lead you, to guide you, to spur you into action.

### Listen well

Discernment takes a lot of energy. Listening is not easy! Like Samuel, you are likely to hear God’s call several times before you realize who is calling. But, with the help of your friends, your families, and your communities of faith, you can find where God’s call is leading you. Your task is to listen, to listen well, and, once you’ve heard God’s voice, to follow it as did the disciples of John—following Jesus who asks each of you, “What are you seeking?”

*By Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, O.S.B. for [vocationnetwork.org](http://vocationnetwork.org)*

## Electronic Donations

St. Ambrose Parish is equipped to make electronic transfers from your checking account or credit card on our website! Christian Financial Credit Union brings parishioners and friends the ability to make an electronic contribution to St. Ambrose on a regular or one-time basis. Your checking account or credit card may be used to make a single donation; or you may set up automatic weekly, monthly or quarterly contributions on a schedule. This solution is not meant to replace the current envelope method of collection, but instead to provide an additional alternative for those who might prefer to make their contributions electronically.

We hope that this additional financial service allows you another way of managing your stewardship to St. Ambrose. Go to [stambrosechurch.net](http://stambrosechurch.net) for information.

# All Things Considered

The delay in Spring's arrival has given us a little more time to get our St. Ambrose beehives up and running again. Last year was a total disaster for our hives, and the two years before that were only slightly better.

Colony collapse disorder, is a term that now gets used for a slew of things that are bad for bees. To specialists, colony collapse is a specific phenomenon. An apparently healthy colony over the course of days or a few weeks loses much of its workforce, while eggs and larvae and often the queen herself, remain alive. Also food stores in collapsing colonies don't get raided by other bees as a failing colony's treasures usually do. The problem probably doesn't rest on a single exotic killer. But so far, no experiment has nailed the proof.

Pope Francis in his Encyclical *Ladato Si* wrote: "*Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.*"

In the spirit of *Ladato Si*, we realize that we must do whatever we can to help heal God's creation. In regard to pollinators, it's not just a nice thing to do, it's essential to the food chain of our planet. Cross-pollination helps at least 30 percent of the world's crops and 90 percent of our wild plants to thrive. Without bees, many food crops – and most likely, ourselves – would slowly die off.

Over the years, we've had tremendous volunteers who have cared for and financed our hives. Appreciating their frustration we begin again in hope. This Spring, we're starting with a new, albeit smaller, group of apiarists headed up by **George Chapman** and **Danielle Varga**. **Timothy Paule** from a new organization called Detroit Hives will also be working with us.

Step one is for us to clean and sterilize the existing hives to ensure that there are no lingering pesticides, mites

or other issues. With the hives down, we can replace some of the privacy hedges and fencing.

The next step will be to order new colonies. In the past, we've ordered from Georgia and California. The prevailing thinking now is that we need to find a good supplier from a more northern climate.

Honoring our Patron Saint, many Ambrosians have taken on the care these marvelous critters as our responsibility. If you want to learn more, join them in getting the hives ready, or if you want to help finance the reestablishment of our hives this season, drop us an email or give us a call.

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This Spring, we've also been rebuilding another "hive" of activity – the local conference of the St. Vincent dePaul Society. Last Sunday's Corporate Communion breakfast gave welcome to **Daniel Malone** the new CEO of the SVdP of Metro Detroit. At that time, he thanked the Vincentians as well as challenged them to grow in holiness. **Paul** and **Marianna Manion** have joined our SVdP Conference, and two other couples are in the process of making their decisions.

The organization founded by St. Vincent dePaul in the 1600's only took off more two centuries later when **Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam**, a French literary scholar, lawyer, journalist and social justice advocate pulled together his fellow university students to form "the Conference of Charity," later known as the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Let's remember that it was the energy of students and young adults that

made this idea work in the first place. Young persons in our parish need to spend some time listening for the call to serve as a Vincentian. We can't energize the SVdP if we keep believing that it is something that is done only by persons on the eve of their retirement. Yet even in retirement there is work that can be done, such as phone intake and scheduling that could be done by someone home bound. Talk with our SVdP president, **Randy Rennpage** or past presidents **Pat Sperti**, **Bob Jogan** or **Liz Witherell** by contacting the rectory.

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Last Sunday's Skype meeting with one of our Religious Education Classes and **Paula Medina Zarate**, a retired teacher from Panama who was the subject of the 2012 miracle at the tomb of Solanus Casey, was postponed until this Sunday. The reason is slightly embarrassing.

It would have been understandable if some complexity in the uplinks were to blame – or if Zarate had a conflict. But no, the cancellation happened just hours before when calls to the homes of the students involved indicated that half the class was not coming to Religious Education that Sunday because of an out-state school program. So Zarate got bumped because she finished a distant second on our "things that are important in the lives of our children" category.

You know, some 40 years ago, we pioneered the "Catholic Sunday School" program in our area – opting for that day over a weeknight Religious Education program, which is still common in other parishes. Sunday morning was chosen because that was the day

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Beehives after colony collapse

## All Things Considered

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and time that seemed to be sacrosanct in most of our households.

That worked until coaches, teachers, and just about everybody else decided that the Third Commandment to keep holy the Lord's Day didn't apply against anything they wanted to do. As a result, Christian families are now finding that academics, and sports are pretty much a seven day a week operation. The school calendar with its myriad extracurricular activities and opportunities almost dictates that there is no Sabbath rest, unless it happens at a scheduled break time – and then everyone flees for a vacation because they are exhausted from the seven day grind.

We've got to re-discover that the Sabbath is God's gift to us. It's His way of saying "slow down, you're moving too fast." Yes, we are commanded to give God worship on Sunday (Saturday). If we don't clear at least Sunday morning for our kids as time for Divine worship and instruction, we are forfeiting something important. We are flattening out the Sabbath so that it becomes another day pretty much like a Monday through Friday.

We exercise due diligence in planning the parish calendar to respect school and sport schedules, but we can't possibly work around every competing offer that comes before our students. In such instances like the one that occurred last week, I'd like to think that knowing the importance of another event to the kids, we could have made some adaptation with our scheduled class and our international guest. Our Religious Education director, **Kelly Woolums** is a school mom and appreciates what other families are up against. Please communicate with her when these kinds of jams are foreseen.

The encroachment of others upon your holy day of rest will only get worse until parents start saying no to those who, however well intentioned, do not value the gift of your Sabbath. Most of the things we need to be most fully alive never come in busyness. They grow in prayer and rest.

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## Post Diakonos

The journey through contemporary American culture – and counter-culture for that matter – can turn on how one stands with regard to Jesus' teaching in John 10:13, regarding the way in which the good shepherd qualitatively differs from all others. It is not limited to but largely turns on this, as Jesus teaches, "... because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep." Is it so – that goodness and good works flow out of something higher than wages? Meditate awhile.

I always expected to be broke, but it didn't work out. By the time I entered apostolic life I had been doing better in my work life than I ever thought I could, what with an art history degree, low self-esteem, and no negotiating skills. But 'struth, as the salary went up, the connection to and belief in the work went down. I don't speak for others, and I am not presenting mine as a cautionary tale, rather, 10:13 resonates because of my life experience, an experience I believe I was delivered from. Such is the difference between Jesus' commitment to us and the commitments that are more commonly experienced in daily life

Context matters. In the ancient imagination, wealth and power were affixed to metaphysics, i.e. those who ruled and lived in splendor were favored by the gods, with material blessings the most obvious. The chasm between being poor and becoming rich was not a form or function of opportunity or ambition, but an observational and a theological presupposition. And today? The blossoming of Catholic social teaching and the flowering of liberation theology reveals that this mindset was not extinguished in antiquity. I know – easy for me to say.

Another caution: it was likely outside the realm of the ancients that a hired hand would receive less than a living wage. Recall the workers in the vineyard from the parable in Matthew, Chapter 20. Everyone received the agreed-upon amount, yet the owner of the vineyard chose not to be limited by the contract and instead showed a generous heart. In the Industrial and post-Industrial Age, and in a globalized economy where capital has more flexibility and mobility than labor, we err by assuming the fruits received by the latter are adequate to sustain and respect the dignity of the worker. In other words, shepherds have had it tough for a while, and it's not growing any easier.

Presbyterian minister Thomas Johnson, reflecting on social justice, says, "We spend more than half of our waking hours for most of our lives at work, and it is therefore extremely important that the way in which we spend these hours be assessed from the perspective of human and spiritual values. If enjoyment and fulfillment come only from non-work activities, then work is not being conducted according to God's plan." Perhaps Psalm 90 ends as it does out of our desire to flourish in all realms: "Prosper the work of our hands! Prosper the work of our hands!"

Fr. Robert Wotypka

## Vincentian Reflection

Today, we celebrate "Good Shepherd Sunday" where we reflect on Jesus' love and care for us. This month, through your gifts, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was able to be "Good Shepherds" to the hearts of those living in poverty, to those who live in fear and doubt, loneliness and dread.

## St. Clare of Montefalco School Open House

Neighboring parish, St. Clare of Montefalco will open their school on April 26<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. for interested parents seeking a Catholic school education for their children beginning next fall. Deeply rooted in the Grosse Pointe community for 90 years, parents, families and teachers at St. Clare work together to provide individualized instruction, enrichment programs and educational resources that enhance the student experience. St. Clare of Montefalco school is located at 16231 Charlevoix. Visit [stclareschool.net](http://stclareschool.net). (313) 647-5100.

## Faith Formation Station

*"I am the one whose praise echoes on high. I adorn all the earth. I am the breeze that nurtures all things green. I encourage blossoms to flourish with ripening fruits. I am led by the spirit to feed the purest streams. I am the rain coming from the dew that causes the grasses to laugh with the joy of life. I am the yearning for good."*

– Hildegard of Bingen

Happy Earth Day! God filled the earth with creatures, plants, and people. He wants us to care for it and enjoy the outdoors. This beautiful day reminds us that the earth's survival is conditional upon our respect and appreciation for its gifts. Take time this week to pray for all of God's Creation. Take a beautify-the-Earth walk. See how many things you can name that God made – while picking up litter. Praise God for the natural wonders and photograph the beauty.

We are wrapping up our year in faith formation here at St. Ambrose with only three more classes left. Please be sure to check your program calendar and review the notes below for all of our special programming ahead.

Our students will be finishing up their textbooks, reflecting on this year's faith journey, and writing classroom celebration prayers to share in the parish bulletin over the summer months. Our high school senior classroom assistants have written reflections that you will see featured in the church bulletin throughout the month of May; they are amazing role models in faith and discipleship for the students in our program. We will also be sharing our year-end classroom prayers in the bulletin.

Some of our students are preparing for their Solemn Eucharist on April 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 P. M. They gathered with their families last Saturday morning for a St. Ambrose faith formation tradition: the Breaking Bread Banquet. The first communion families shared a meal, prayed, and socialized together while reflecting on Jesus' love and forgiveness through the Kerygma. Using Scripture, guided prayer, and facilitated discussion, the children experienced God's personal love and accepted Jesus' gift of salvation by making the choice to invite Jesus into their lives. Please keep these special sacrament students, their families, and their catechists in your prayers. All are invited to come celebrate and support them on their special day.

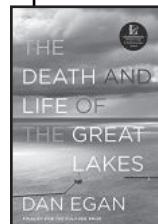
Our special sacrament students have worked hard at being disciples all year. Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade confirmandi volunteered at our Fish Dinners all through Lent; they are outstanding examples of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in our world. Many students wonder if they, too, can be disciples. Not only can they be, but they already are. Some people get the words apostle and disciple mixed up. Jesus had only 12 apostles: men that he chose to be his leaders after his death. But Jesus had lots of other followers – men, women, even children – who were called disciples. He counted on these people to spread the news that the Messiah had come. To call ourselves "Christian," or followers of Jesus (which is what the word disciple means), we must be willing to lead the life that Jesus taught us and to tell others about the things Jesus did and said. So, yes! We can all be disciples. And if we are baptized and a believer in Jesus Christ, we already are. Our hope is that our students remember their call to discipleship and continue their journey in faith throughout the summer and throughout their lives.

Peace & Joy, Kelly Woolums

### PROGRAM REMIDERS:

- Last Class / May Crowning Celebration: Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup> 11:15 A.M. Liturgy.
- Please join us in Church after our last class for a special May Crowning family liturgy.
- Confirmation Meeting. Brother Robert and Kelly Woolums will be in touch soon regarding a rescheduled date for the meeting to discuss upcoming retreat and service dates.

## Marcellina's Book Club



The Great Lakes hold 20% of the world's surface fresh water and provide sustenance, work and recreation for millions of Americans. But they are under threat as never before, and their problems are spreading.

In the Death and Life of the Great Lakes, author Dan Egan paints a portrait of an ecological catastrophe happening before our eyes – blending the epic story of the lakes and the ways we can restore and preserve them.

We are in the process of connecting with the author to see if he can pay our book club a visit at a date to be announced. Pick up a copy of the book and get a head-start in reading this important work which was one of this year's twenty Notable Book Honorees by the State Library of Michigan.

## The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

**Pastor:** Rev. Timothy R. Pelc  
**Assistant:** Rev. Robert Wotycka OFM, Cap  
**Assistant:** Rev. Mr. John Maksym  
**Pastoral Minister:** Charles Dropiewski  
**Religious Education:** Kelly Anne Woolums  
**Minister of Music:** Norah Duncan IV  
**Office Manager:** Pamela Moffitt

### Sacramental Celebrations

**Masses:** On the Lord's Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

**Baptism:** Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

**Penance:** As announced and by appointment.

**Marriage:** Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

**Funeral:** Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

### Directory

**Parish Office:** 15020 Hampton  
 Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230  
**Tel:** (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838  
**Email address:** stambrose@comcast.net  
**Religious Education:** (313) 822-1248  
**Pastoral Ministry:** (313) 822-2017  
**Ark Scheduling:** (313) 822-2814  
**Parish Website:** stambrosechurch.net

# Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

**Monday, April 23**

*St. George, martyr & St. Adalbert, bishop and martyr*

8:30 - Morning Prayer

**Tuesday, April 24**

*St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest & martyr*

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Norman Hotchkiss

**Wednesday, April 25**

*St. Mark, evangelist*

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

**Thursday, April 26**

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Terrence Ferret

**Friday, April 27**

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Al Frasier

**Saturday, April 28**

*St. Peter Chanel, priest & martyr & St. Louis Grignion de Montfort, priest*

1:30 p.m. - Solemn Communion

4:00 p.m. - Mass - For All People

**Sunday, April 29**

*Fifth Sunday of Easter*

8:30 a.m. - For All People

11:15 a.m. - For All People

## Scriptures for the 4<sup>th</sup> Week of Easter

**Monday, April 23**

- Acts 11: 1-18
- Ps 42: 2-3; 43: 3-4
- Jn 10: 1-10

**Tuesday, April 24**

- Acts 11: 19-26
- Ps 87: 1-2
- Jn 10: 22-30

**Wednesday, April 25**

- 1 Pt 5: 5b-14
- Ps 89: 2-3, 6-7, 16-17
- Mk 16: 15-20

**Thursday, April 26**

- Acts 13: 13-25
- Ps 89: 2-3, 21-22, 25, 27
- Jn 13: 16-20

**Friday, April 27**

- Acts 13: 26-33
- Ps 2: 6-11
- Jn 6: 52-59

**Saturday, April 28**

- Acts 13: 44-52
- Ps 98: 1-4
- Jn 14: 7-14

**Sunday, April 29**

- Acts 9: 26-31
- 1 Jn 3: 18-24
- Jn 15: 1-8

# Fifth Sunday of Easter

*April 28<sup>th</sup> and April 29<sup>th</sup>*

**4:00 p.m. – Saturday – Celebrant:** Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Pat Ticknor  
**Eucharistic Ministers:** Beverly Bennert, Maria Cox- & Adam Borkowski, Della Cimini  
**Altar Servers:** Sean Hall, Frankie Pangborn

**8:30 a.m. – Sunday – Celebrant:** Fr. Bede **Lector:** Colleen Jogan  
**Eucharistic Ministers:** Colleen Drummond, Christopher Harrison, Bob Jogan, Steve Linne, Joellyn Valgoi  
**Altar Servers:** Dailey Jogan, Nathan Lipka

**11:15 a.m. - Celebrant:** Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Pat Sperti  
**Eucharistic Ministers:** Lupe Davila, Doris Fleming, Sue & Roger Playwin, Cristina Swiatkowski, Patty Yaden  
**Altar Servers:** Liam & Maria Liburdi

## Your Envelope Speaks . . . the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

**On Sunday, April 15, 2018**

in envelopes we received ..... \$6,796.00  
 in the loose collection ..... \$608.00  
 in electronic donations ..... \$1,390.00  
 in children's envelopes..... \$2.00  
 for a total of..... **\$8,796.00**

**Under** budget for the week..... **\$1,304.00**

Number of envelopes mailed ..... 800  
 Number of envelopes used..... 151

*"I am the good shepherd...and I lay down my life for the sheep...and they will heed my voice." – JOHN 10:14-16*

When you pray, do you only ask Jesus for the things that you want? Do you ever ask Him what He wants from you? How do you listen for His response? Take time every day, in silence, to actively listen for His response.

## Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay, Josephine Marino, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Mary Myers, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Buccer, Emilie Kasper, Arthur Stoyshin, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha Luna, Dan Urbiel, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Darby O'Toole, Alexandra Billiu, Frank Gregory and Jeri Krueger.



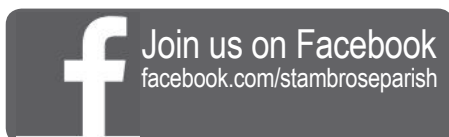
## Epiphany Education Center Auction

**IHM Sisters Marie Cyril Delisi** and **Alice Baker** spent decades of their careers at St. Ambrose Academy. Upon their retirement, they remained in the area and continued their urban ministry under the auspices of Epiphany Education Center, which provides free after-school tutoring, one-on-one.

Cyril and Alice have just turned over the reigns of Epiphany Center to **Roslyn Taylor**, a professional educator who serves there on a part-time basis and coordinates the work of all the volunteer tutors.

Let's continue to support the good work started by our IHM friends. One way is through their Silent Auction which will be held at an annual fund raiser on April 28<sup>th</sup> at Sacred Heart Activities Center near Eastern Market.

To arrange a donation of an auction item, call **George Bush**, who is one of the Center's tutors, at (313) 640-8295. The better and more interesting the auction item, the more revenue it produces for Epiphany Center, so be creative and generous in your giving.





## THE MOST UNEXPECTEDLY RELIGIOUS FILM OF 2018

SPOILER ALERT! Article contains many spoilers about the film

I went to see [A Quiet Place](#), John Krasinski's new thriller, with absolutely no anticipation of finding theological or spiritual themes. I just wanted a fun evening at the movies. How wonderful when a film surprises you! I don't know if I can find the golden thread that draws all of these themes together into a coherent message, but I think one would have to be blind not to see a number of religious motifs in this absorbing film.

The basic structure of the narrative is laid out in simple, deft strokes. We learn that a terrible plague of fierce, devouring creatures has descended on the earth. Where are the monsters from? Outer space, maybe? We're never told—which makes the story more compelling. The few people who have survived the holocaust have learned that the creatures, though blind, are extraordinarily acute of hearing. Therefore, the key to survival is silence. Our attention becomes focused on the Abbott family, two youthful parents and three small children, making their quiet way through a beautiful but dangerous open country. When the youngest of the kids flips a switch on his toy rocket, causing a buzzing sound to pierce the silence, one of the beasts devours him just before his terrified father can save him.

We flash-forward several months later, and we watch the Abbotts (can the name have possibly been accidental?) going about their lives in what could only be characterized as a monastic manner: no conversations above a whisper, elaborate sign language, quiet work at books and in the fields, silent but obviously fervent prayer before the evening meal, etc. (I will confess that this last gesture, so thoroughly absent from movies and television today, startled me.) Given the awful demands of the moment, any gadgets, machines, electronic entertainment, or noisy implements are out of the question. Their farming is by hand; their fishing is done with pre-modern equipment; even their walking about is done barefoot. And what is most marvelous to behold is that, in this prayerful, quiet, pre-modern atmosphere, even with the threat of imminent death constantly looming, a generous and mutually self-sacrificing family flourishes. The parents care for and protect their children, and the remaining brother and sister are solicitous toward one another and toward their parents. The young girl even regularly risks her life to pay silent tribute to her fallen brother at the spot where he was killed.

Monsters and beasts in the more reflective horror movies are evocative of those things that frighten us the most: illness, failure, our own wickedness, death itself. How wonderful that a Hollywood movie would suggest that what is needed to keep the darkness at bay in our time is silence, simplicity, a return to the earth, prayer, and care for one another.

The central drama of [A Quiet Place](#) is that Mrs. Abbott is expecting a child. The entire family realizes, of course, that a wailing infant would, given the circumstances, mean almost certain death for all of them. And yet, they decide not to kill the child at his birth but to hide him and mute his cries in various ways. When so many in our cul-

ture are willing to murder their children for the flimsiest of reasons, when the law gives full protection even to partial-birth abortion, when people blithely say that they would never bring a baby into such a terrible world, the monastic family in this film welcomes life, even into the worst of worlds, and even when such an act is of supreme danger to them. As the baby is coming into the light, the mother finds herself alone (watch the film for the details) and in the most vulnerable situation, for one of the beasts has made its way into their house. As she labors to give birth, the devouring animal lurks. I was put immediately in mind of the scene in the book of Revelation, where Mary is in the throes of childbirth as the dragon patiently waits to consume the child.

As the abbess is struggling to give birth, the abbot has gone in search of his endangered children. He finds them, to his horror, trapped in an abandoned car, one of the beasts clawing at them through the roof, like the T-Rex in Jurassic Park. After mouthing the words, "I love you; I have always loved you" to his daughter, who gazes at him through the car window, the father screams, drawing the monster to himself. This act of self-emptying love, which serves to liberate his children from danger, is beautifully evocative of the speculations of the Church Fathers regarding the death of Jesus. In his act of self-sacrifice on the cross, the fathers argued, Jesus lured the dark powers into the open and away from the human beings who had been in their thrall. Along similar lines, in an odd working of plot or Providence that can be likened to the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, it becomes clear in the wake of the father's death that he has left behind for his family the means by which the monsters can be defeated.

I have no real idea whether any or all of this was in the mind of the filmmaker, but I do know from John Krasinski's Wikipedia page that he is the son of a Polish-Catholic father and an Irish-Catholic mother and that he was raised a devout practitioner of his faith. So until definitively shown otherwise, I am going to maintain that [A Quiet Place](#) is the most unexpectedly religious film of 2018.

By Bp. Robert Barron for [wordonfire.org](#) 4/10/18.