



St. Mary's Parish

www.stmarysinhigginville.org

401 W. Broadway, Higginville, MO. 64037

Phone 660-584-3038

Father Tom Hawkins, Pastor

Sunday Obligation Mass Times: Saturday, 4:00 pm, Sunday, 10:30 am

Mass or Communion Service: Mon. thru Fri.: 8:00 am

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday, 3:30 pm and after the 4:00 pm Mass, and by appointment.

Sacrament of Marriage: Contact Pastor 9 months prior

Sacrament of Baptism: Registered parishioners call Pastor for class & date

MARY AND JOSEPH

Mary and Joseph play a key role in our Catholic devotional and spiritual life. No doubt, much of our devotion to Jesus' mother, Mary, and his foster father, Joseph, is rooted in our appreciation of their willingness to put themselves at the disposal of the will of God, to seek what God most desired of them and to carry it out. We find their example inspiring, and their proximity to the Lord consoling and encouraging. Knowing that they said yes to God in such dramatic and pivotal ways, even when there was so much at stake and there were so many obstacles to take into account, gives us much to ponder. Yet there is something else we must not forget: while God could have come to be with us as a child in any manner at all, God chose to be with us through the active and humble cooperation of a woman and a man, Mary and Joseph.

Of all of the names connected to our Lord, two stand out in the ways that they describe the identity and mission of the Lord: "Emmanuel: God is with us" and "Jesus: God saves." The most stunning thing about our Christian faith is that God is not distant, abstract, demanding, a god of wrath and military might. Rather, God desires to be near to us, in relationship, one with us in our challenges and in our joys. God is with us even when remaining with us will lead to betrayal, persecution, and violent death. God who is beyond all of this struggle remains with us so that we might transcend the limitations of our human nature in order to become more like God, to embrace the divine light that resides within each of us. As we approach the celebration of Christmas, consider this: what does it mean to you that God is with us, now and always? What does this call you to be and to do as a Christian, as a follower of God's Son, Jesus, who is with us and who saves us?

Today's Readings: Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

BEGIN YOUR DAY WITH CHRIST.

*Each morning members of our parish gather to read the scriptures,
 pray for the needs of the world and the Church and spend time in quiet meditation.
 Because Jesus Christ is in the Mass, it is the most important thing a parish does.
 "It is the source and summit of all Christian life." from #274 Compendium of the Catechism*

Saturday, December 21st – 4:00pm

SAINT PETER CANSIUS A Dutch Jesuit. A leading voice in the Church's response to the Reformation in Germany, he founded several colleges. Died 1597

Saint Mary's Parishioners Living and Deceased

Sunday, December 22nd – 10:30am The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Martha Pollard R.I.P. by Darrel & Juanita Rinne

Monday, December 23rd – 8:00am

SAINT JOHN of KANTY A professor of philosophy and theology at the University of Cracow, Poland. Noted for his simplicity, humility and charity to the poor. Died 1473. A leading voice in the Church's response to the Reformation.

Kenneth Bell R.I.P. by Virginia Graham

TUESDAY DECEMBER 24th
 Christmas Eve Masses
 4:00pm – Saint Mary's Parishioners Living and Deceased
 7:00pm – Martha Pollard, In Loving Memory

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25th
 Christmas Day Mass
 10:00am – Saint Mary's Parishioners Living and Deceased

Thursday, December 26th – 8:00am

SAINT STEPHEN the FIRST MARTYR One of the first seven Deacons. His being stoned to death is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. A tragic event in which Saul, after his conversion- Saint Paul, was an active supporter

Dale Parker R.I.P. by Anita Parker

Friday, December 27th – 8:00am

SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE and EVANGELIST The 'beloved disciple'. Son of Zebedee and brother of James. Only apostle present at the crucifixion of Jesus. Entrusted by the dying Jesus with the care of Mary. Credited as the author of the Gospel which bears his name, two epistles and the highly symbolic Book of Apocalypse. Died a very old man (possibly 100) at Ephesus.

Safe trip to the Philippines December 1-22 2019 by Kyle, Amor, Ty & Kaleb Gassen

Saturday, December 28th – 4:00pm

FEAST of the HOLY INNOCENTS The children of Bethlehem executed by order of King Herod in an attempt to destroy the child visited by the Maji.

Thomas Graham R.I.P. by Virginia Graham

Sunday, December 29th – 10:30am The Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Saint Mary's Parishioners Living and Deceased

MASS ASSISTANTS	THIS WEEKEND		NEXT WEEKEND	
	Saturday, Dec. 21	Sunday, Dec. 22	Saturday, Dec. 28	Sunday, Dec. 29
USHERS	Pete Beck Bill Kohne	Knights of Columbus	Lisa Kuecker Bill Wallpe	Robert Quarti Mike Ryun
SERVERS	Bob Brown	Knights of Columbus	Mike Deamos	Amanda Daniel Cate Cooper
LECTORS	Mike Esser Howard Goring	Knights of Columbus	Bob Brown Sandy May	Karen Schroeder Volunteer Needed
COMMUNION	Gail Deamos Howard Goring Barbara Beck	Knights of Columbus	Barbara Beck Carol Summerlin Joan Stuerke	Madison Bennett Kristina Campbell Beth Schlotzhauer
OFFERTORY GIFTS	Peggy Singh	Knights of Columbus	Gary & Terie Starke	Bennie & Nancy Spain
GREETERS	Barbara Beck Lisa Kuecker	Knights of Columbus	Lisa Kuecker Peggy Singh	Roger Rinne Mike Ryun
SHUT-INS	Knights of Columbus		Marty Bell & Josie McDermid	

ACA DIOCESAN GOAL REACHED

As of December 13th, 46 households of Saint Mary's have donated \$12,340 to this year's Annual Catholic Appeal. The diocesan goal for our parish is \$9,000 which puts us at 136% of the way to our goal!

When making a pledge please be sure to note that you are a member of Saint Mary's Parish in Higginsville (there are a lot of different 'Saint Mary' Parishes all throughout the diocese)- the diocese does keep track of this.

GOT FLU? PLEASE STAY HOME AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Yes, it is a moral obligation that Catholics take upon themselves to attend a Sunday Mass every week. It is the essential practice to develop a Catholic spirituality. But... when you are not well, please stay home and take care of yourself and spare others from being exposed. Thank you.

ASSISTANTS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES

To accommodate different families Christmas schedules, we do not schedule Assistants for the Christmas Masses, but seek volunteers for Readers, Altar Servers, Communion Ministers, Ushers, Greeters and Offertory Gifts. If you would like to help at one of the Christmas Masses, the sign-up sheet is on the east table behind the pews. Thanks!

GAUDETE ET EXULTATE (*Rejoice and Be Glad*)

The recent Apostolic Exhortation
of Pope Francis about Holiness in today's world.
For Personal Meditation or Family Discussion

"We often hear it said that, with respect to relativism and the flaws of our present world, the situation of migrants for example, is a lesser issue. Some Catholics consider it a secondary issue compared to the 'grave' bioethical questions. That a politician looking for votes might say such a thing is understandable, but not a Christian, for whom the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children. Can we not realize that this is exactly what Jesus demands of us, when he tells us that in welcoming the stranger we welcome him (Matthew 23:35)? Saint Benedict did so readily, and though it might have complicated; the life of his monks, he ordered that all guests who knocked at the monastery door be welcomed 'like Christ' with a gesture of veneration; the poor and pilgrims where to be met with 'the greatest care and solicitude.'"

Gaudete et Exultate #102

BISHOP JOHNSTON'S

"HEALING OUR FAMILY SURVEY"

An email survey from the diocese is being sent to randomly selected Catholics throughout the diocese. If you use email, watch your inbox for the subject line "Bishop Johnston's Healing Our Family Survey". If you happen to receive the survey, your response will be appreciated.

WHAT TO DO WITH UNNEEDED WINTER COATS

If you have a winter coat you no longer have need of, a place to donate is 'The Free Coat Closet' maintained year-round at First Presbyterian Church, 111 Fairground Avenue in Higginsville. Coats should be clean and in good condition. Before dropping off, telephone the church: (660)584-3372.

Coats and other donations of clothing for young children can be made to the 'Baby Grace' program which supports mothers and children in need. It is operated out of Grace Methodist Church at 16 W 15th Street (use the Walnut Street entrance). Before dropping off telephone the church: (660)584-2211.

AT HOME RETREAT - JANUARY 5-11

All the faithful of our diocese are invited to participate in an online retreat to conclude the Diocesan Holy year of Renewal. This is free and includes daily scripture readings and a brief video reflection meditating on the meaning of our baptism and the diocesan priority "Growing God's Family." The retreat will be available in English and Spanish. It may be used in the home by individuals and families. Sign up to receive daily email reminders at www.kcsjatholic.org/retreat.

SAVE THE DATE!

Adult Parishioners - New Year & Epiphany Party
January 4th, 2020 After Mass around 5:15pm

CHOICE WINE: 7 STEPS TO A SUPERABUNDANT MARRIAGE

Beginning Monday, January 27, a nine-session program at the Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty will offer to teach couples seven steps to a better married life. Each evening will begin with a simple meal. Child care available for a free will offering. Register at info@pbrenewalcenter.org or phone 816-415-3745. The gathering starts at 6:30pm. The Renewal Center is located at 2120 Saint Gaspar Way in Liberty MO.

WEAFS ON BREAK

Wednesday Evening Adult Faith Study is on break until the Wednesday after Epiphany, January 8. Anyone and everyone is invited to be part of this small group of adults which gathers most Wednesday evenings to do some form of Faith Study led by Roger Rinne. This is completely free. Mass is available in the church at 6:00pm. Supper is in the Lower Meeting Room after Mass. The evening's program starts at 7:00pm and is over at 8:00pm. All are invited. Some people come at 6pm, some at 6:30 pm some at 7pm. Come and go as it works for you.

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph is committed to combating sexual abuse in the Church. If you are a victim of abuse or observe or suspect sexual abuse: Call the Missouri Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-392-3738 (if the victim is currently under the age of 18) and contact your local law enforcement agency or call 911 and after reporting to these civil and law enforcement authorities, report suspected sexual abuse of minor or vulnerable adult to the **Diocesan Ombudsman, Joe Crayon, at 816-812-2500 or crayon@ombudsmankcsj.org** if the abuse involves a priest, deacon, employee or volunteer of the diocese of Kansas City/St. Joseph. The Diocese has a sincere commitment to providing care and healing resources to victims of sexual abuse and their families. Please contact the **Victim Advocate, Kathleen Chastain, at 816-392-0011.**

CATHOLIC CALENDARS AVAILABLE

Thanks to Chris Kaiser of *Kaiser-Weigers Funeral Home* for providing 2020 Catholic calendars for those who would like them. Free for the taking- on the tables at the doors. Help yourself! And don't wait until they are gone.

KNIGHTS HOLY HOUR, ROSARY AND MASS THIS SUNDAY

This Sunday, December 22, will be the quarterly 'Knights Mass' at which all leadership roles are filled by the Knights of Columbus. Starting one hour before Mass there will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a Rosary led by the Knights. All Knights are encouraged to take this opportunity to spend some time in Prayer.

YOUTH GROUP

Stephen & Kristin Vetter are in the process of planning for the Christians Weekend in Branson scheduled for April 3rd-5th. They need to know if you plan on attending by December 29th to preorder tickets at a discounted price.

SNOW SHOVEL BRIGADE BEING FORMED

When there is a significant snow prior to a weekend Mass the parish pays to have the parking lots plowed. We depend on volunteers to shovel the sidewalks and the stairs. If you are willing to help shovel when needed, please let the parish office know 660-584-3038. Remember to use only plastic shovels on the stairs and east ramp.

GRIEF AND THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Many older people missing their departed loved ones experience the pains of absence and grief during the festive times of the year. As a help, copies of an old article "Surviving the Holidays When Someone You Love Has Died" are available 'on the tables behind the pews'.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO DECORATE FOR CHRISTMAS AFTER MASS THIS SUNDAY

Lots of help is needed to get our church decorated for Christmas. Including manpower to haul the manger (very heavy), set up Christmas trees and relocate statues. A lunch of salad and pizza will be served after Mass this Sunday, December 22, downstairs in the Lower Meeting Room before the work begins. All help is needed and very much welcome.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COATS FOR KIDS



The Knights of Columbus raised funds to donate 10 Coats for Kids to those in need within the Lafayette CO C-1 Middle School. (Pictured left to right Tania Pessetto District Accountant, Cody Moss Knights of Columbus, Howard Goring Knights of Columbus, and Susan Otero Special Services Secretary) Yet another example of the Knights giving back to our community.

WEEKLY COLLECTION

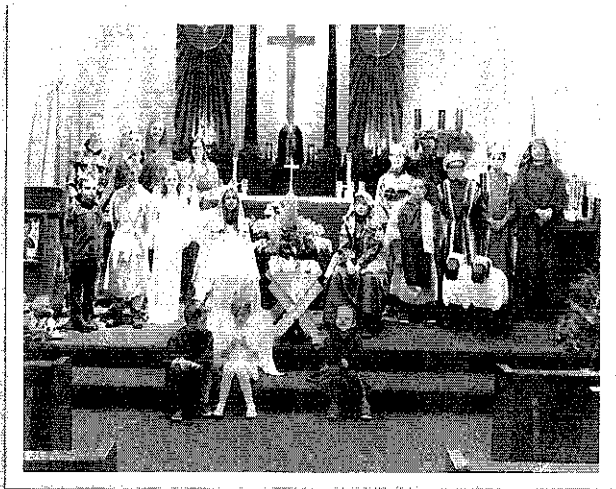
December 8th-- \$1,753

Loose Cash – \$155

Total Parish Support – \$1,933

Average Weekly expenses -- \$3,278

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT THANK YOU!



Thanks to Kristina Campbell & Rebecca Hoeflicker for organizing and directing our Children's Christmas Pageant on Saturday, December 14th. We are grateful to all PSR students who participated and all that were able to attend.

A special thanks to Chrisolyn's Gluten Free Bakery, in Waverly MO, for providing beautifully decorated sugar cookies and fudge afterwards for Jesus' birthday party.

COMMUNION MINISTERS FOR SHUT-INS

Visiting the sick is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy. During the first week of each month Father Tom visits shut-ins and takes Holy Communion to them. On the weekends of other weeks of the month volunteers take Communion to them. If you are willing to visit the sick and bring them Holy Communion, contact Josie McDermed:

BRUNCH NEXT SUNDAY

Celebrate the Fifth Day of Christmas and the Feast of the Holy Family with Brunch following the 10:30am Mass next Sunday, December 29th. This is hosted by the Knights of Columbus. There is no charge but you are invited to make a free will donation.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

December 22

Dear Parishioners,

Happy last days of Advent.

And may you be blessed with a peaceful and meaningful Christmas and a very merry one.

Hopefully you will remember that for Catholics (as in Canada, Mexico & Europe) Christmas is not just a day but all the days between Christmas Eve and Epiphany-January 4.

It is odd that Americans can understand that any and every sports playoff season can last for a long time but tell them that the Christmas Season lasts for a traditional twelve days and they don't believe it.

When the Puritans came to the 'New World' they tried to stamp out Christmas because they saw it as wasteful and frivolous and way too Catholic. So the old custom of Christmas gently spread over many days got short shrift. This caused an awful lot of pressure (like a volcano) to be built into the American Christmas Day, so that in one day all the relatives have to be seen and all the presents opened and the next day the tree needs to be tossed out – because it's all over!

In most parts of the world Christmas is far less frantic and much less stressful. This year you might do yourself a favor and try it that way.

Our ordinary parish policy is that on the Big Feast Days (Easter, Christmas, All Saints etc.) all Masses are offered not for particular individuals, but for all members of the parish. This Christmas Eve, our 7:00pm Mass will be an exception. It will be offered in memory of Martha Pollard who for decades was the organist and choir director at that Mass. Martha is fondly remembered and much missed by all who knew her and it's only fitting that she be part of this Christmas Eve.

But of course at every Mass we are united with all the Saints.

Although Martha will not be at the organ this Christmas we will have music at all our Masses thanks to Virginia Graham who has offered to do double duty by playing at the 4pm and 7pm Eve Masses. And Ron Sayer who will be here for Christmas Morning Mass at 10am. May all your Days of Christmas be blessed and my there be many of them.

Peace, Blessings, Joy!
And Love in the Lord!
Father Tom Hawkins

MOVIE REVIEW

'A Hidden Life' is the movie we need

New film portraying life of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter is 'the perfect movie for our moment in time'

By Father Andrew Clyne

For some time now, I have been a great admirer of the director Terrence Malick, especially following the release of his 2011 film "The Tree of Life." I also count Franz Jägerstätter (1907-43) — Austrian farmer, husband, father and martyr who was beatified by the Church in 2007 — a personal hero. So when I discovered that Malick would be making a movie about Jägerstätter, entitled "A Hidden Life" (2019), it struck me as a marriage made in cinematic heaven.

I went to go see a sneak preview of the movie anticipating a deeply satisfying personal experience, which the movie more than delivered. What I did not necessarily foresee was that I would be watching the perfect movie for our moment in time, but that is exactly what I saw. For the story of Franz Jägerstätter — expressed with the beauty and understated eloquence characteristic of Malick's style — is a timely antidote to the discouragement that is so pervasive today, both in the Church and the world. Every image counts in a Ter-

rence Malick movie; nothing is extraneous or wasted. So I think it no accident that the images that open "A Hidden Life" are not ones, in fact, filmed by Malick himself, but rather are taken from the most notorious of Nazi propaganda films: Lemi Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will" (1935). It is also not accidental that Malick quickly transitions from the monumental scale and bombast of Riefenstahl's depiction of Nazism to the stillness, simplicity and intimacy of Jägerstätter's life in his beloved village of St. Radegund. Right from the very start, Malick sets about establishing the fundamental dramatic tension that works its way throughout the entirety of "A Hidden Life": between, on the one hand, the forces of evil that are plunging the world into madness and war, and on the other, the holy, sane and beautiful life shared in the Jägerstätter household, which is increasingly menaced by the viciousness and insanity of a surrounding world rapidly succumbing to lies and the basest of impulses.

The wicked genius of Riefenstahl's film is the way in which, through the power of grandeur and spectacle, it attempts to beat its audience into submission. The attitudes that such propaganda is designed to produce — subservience and acquiescence — are voiced by many of the figures that populate "A Hidden Life," who try and persuade Jägerstätter of the pointlessness of his refusal to swear the personal oath of allegiance to Hitler, as was required of all those in the German Army.



Fox Searchlight Pictures

(depicted with unassuming strength by August Diehl) refuses to yield to discouragement, rejecting the fundamental lie that alone can make propaganda efforts like "Triumph of the Will" succeed: if an idea that is false and wrong is either widely held or expressed with great force and frequency, it must finally be assented to in the end. All too many accept this lie as true. What made Jägerstätter's witness so impressive is that despite the unimaginable pressures compelling him to assent to such deceit, he never did.

And where did that ability to cling to what was right and true come from? Quite obviously, based on biographical details and as shown in subtle ways throughout the film, from Jägerstätter's faith in Jesus Christ. It was because Jägerstätter knew in the depths of his soul that Jesus Christ was his rock, his fortress (cf. Ps 18), that he was able to stand strong and not be carried away by the tumultuous waves that crashed over him.

In the end, despite all appearances, it is not Jägerstätter's

actions that proved fruitless, but rather the forces against which he fought for he now shares in the life of God that never ceases, while what he stood against expended itself in a campaign of destruction and death-dealing, culminating in its self-immolation in the rubble strewn streets of Berlin.

Just as Jägerstätter lived his hidden life in a dark world, so, too, is our time plagued by powerful forces of malice and duplicity, which not only wend their way through the world but sadly through the Church as well. They insist on our capitulation, and in our moments of greatest discouragement, we might find ourselves tempted to give them what they want.

Then a movie like "A Hidden Life" comes along, reminding us in the most powerful of ways that such surrender is never required of us. And that is why it is the exact film we need now: a movie made by an extraordinary filmmaker about an extraordinary man, arriving not a moment too soon.

Father Andrew Clyne writes from Maryland.



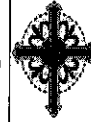
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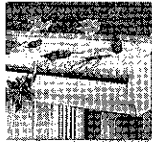
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