

## SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH



## NEWSLETTER

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**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

**I hope the Advent Season has opened your heart to the possibility of a wonderful, personal encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ! As I write these words, I must say thank you for the overwhelming support you have shown me during the recent loss of my best friend Mike. Each prayer has been answered, and your concern has lifted me up. I am looking forward to this advent as a journey into the mystery of the incarnation. As we approach the birth of our Savior, hope springs eternal. It has been said that grief can be like sitting in a dark room waiting for a light to be turned on. You have been that light for me. Let us use this Advent Season as an opportunity to reach out to those we have lost touch with. There may have been a reason, or just the passing of time. Either way, they are usually a simple phone call away. Time flies, and soon we will be ushering in 2026. May the New Year bring you new joys and new opportunities to share the light of Christ with those you meet and those you love.**

**God bless you, Father Stephen**



# TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST IN THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON



The Advent comes to an end. The waiting is over, but the Church continues to wait for the second coming of the Lord. On that day, Christ will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. In a special way, the Church celebrates Christmas to remember God becoming one of us. The celebration of Christmas keeps alive the ancient hope for the Messiah, as the faithful share in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming and renew their eager desire for His second coming. (CCC 524) Celebrating Christmas invites us to reflect on the second coming of Christ.

Our Messiah and King was born in a manger wrapped in bands of cloth. It reflects the economic and social status of the Messiah's parents. Christ was not born in luxurious surroundings but in the humblest of places—in an animal's stall, lying in a manger. The Son of God was born in simplicity and humility so that he might be available and accessible to everyone. There are no palace gates or guards to keep anyone from meeting him. The shepherds, considered of low estate in society, were able to come and see the Lord.

The only access to encounter the Lord in the manger is humility. It takes humility to go and experience the Lord in a manger in an uncomfortable animal-keeping environment. Humility is a virtue that recognizes our limitations and submits to God and to others for God's sake. This virtue does not depend on our status in life. Anyone with a humble heart will seek the Lord in the manger, in whose fullness we will receive grace upon grace to overcome our limitations. The source of grace lies in the manger, waiting for us to come and adore him.

Continued on next page

# TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST IN THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

Mary, the Mother of God, is a living example of humility. In the Magnificat, Mary states that God has shown favor to her lowliness as His servant. “Lowliness” here means humility. In her humble state and submission, she received favor from the Lord. She acknowledged her limitations, and God’s grace was granted to her. As we celebrate Christmas, we should recognize our vulnerability and sinfulness. Enter the animal stable and meet the Incarnate God, whose fullness we have received grace. In this season, may the Lord dwell in our hearts and minds, giving us the grace to persevere in our efforts. May we remain humble in all circumstances, especially during difficult and challenging times, so that those we will meet during this festival may help us and lead us to Christ. When we humble ourselves before the Lord, He will lift us with His grace.

IN CHRIST ALONE,

*Gilbert Ofori Mensah*



# St. Nicholas Festival



## St. Nicholas Fest for the Parish

Friday, December 19, 2025, Sacred Heart Parish

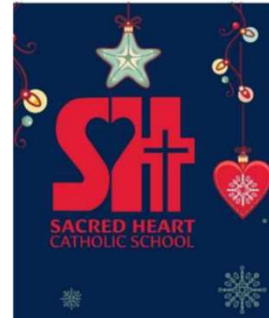
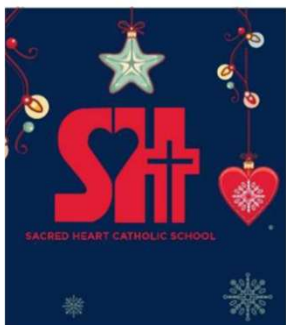
Social Hall at 05:00 pm – 06:30 pm

St. Nicholas fest allows us to experience our multicultural community, unique Christmas traditions

(Posadas) and offering hot drinks. Come out with your family, friend, and neighbors.

Christmas Concert at 07:00 pm in the Church.

Christmas mugs for sale to celebrate this joyous occasion for \$5.00.





# Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary



"The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin."

In 1854, Pope Pius IX's solemn declaration, "Ineffabilis Deus," clarified with finality the long-held belief of the Church that Mary was conceived free from original sin. Mary was granted this extraordinary privilege because of Her unique role in history as the Mother of God. That is, she received the gift of salvation in Christ from the very moment of her conception.

Even though Mary is unique in all humanity for being born without sin, she is held up by the Church as a model for all humanity in Her holiness and Her purity in her willingness to accept the Plan of God for her.

Every person is called to recognize and respond to God's call to their own vocation in order to carry out God's plan for their life and fulfill the mission prepared for them since before the beginning of time. Mary's "Let it be done to me according to Thy Word," in response of the Angel Gabriel's greeting, is the response required of all Christians to God's Plan.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a time to celebrate the great joy of God's gift to humanity in Mary, and to recognize with greater clarity, the truth that each and every human being has been created by God to fulfill a particular mission that he and only he can fulfill.

"The word of the Lord came to me thus: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." (Jeremiah 1:5-6)

Source: Catholic News Agency (CAN is a service of EWTN News, Inc.)

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, also known as The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a Catholic Celebration of Our Blessed Mother, Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, she was conceived without original sin. Our Faith in and our knowledge of Biblical scripture confirms this teaching and belief. This belief is considered an important step in the process of salvation. The Immaculate Conception is a Solemnity, the highest rank of feast day, and a Holy Day of Obligation. The Immaculate Conception is considered one of the strongest examples of simple, obedient faith in Catholic practices.

We are taught and believe that Mary is the redeemed Second Eve, The Ark of a New Covenant between God and humanity.

Mary, the Blessed Virgin Mary, is Patroness of the United States, under the title of the Immaculate Conception. In 1858, Bernadette Soubirous, a peasant girl from Lourdes, France, had a series of visions of the Virgin Mary. During one of the visions, on March 25, Mary identified herself as "the Immaculate Conception." Like other apparitions, the Immaculate Conception chose to reveal herself to someone meek and humble of heart.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated on December 8, 2025. A definition of obligation is that Catholics are required to attend Mass on this day, unless they have a "grave cause" such as illness or caring for an infant.



# Our Church - The Marian Window



The Marian Window portrays the coronation of Mary by her Son, Jesus, as the Queen of Heaven and Earth. The depiction also includes God the Father, the Hand in blessing, and God the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the Dove. The lower part of the window depicts the “Dormition” of Mary, her death. It is Church teaching that Mary was assumed into heaven, body and soul, following her death, (Feast of Assumption, August 15). Angels assist at the Coronation and the Dormition. The other central depictions of Mary include Our Lady of Guadalupe and Mary presenting Jesus in the Temple (the Presentation). The incident is recorded in the Gospel of Luke when Mary and Joseph bring Jesus following Jewish custom. Mary is pictured with “two turtle doves” the offering from the poor mentioned in the Gospel

of Luke. The outer portion of the Marian Window pictures Our Lady of Perpetual Help (top left), Our Lady of Grace (bottom left), Immaculate Conception (bottom right), and Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament (top right).

**Source-Book: Sacred Heart Catholic Church - a Testimony of Faith**

[WWW.SACREDHEARTWR.ORG/PASTORAL-COUNCIL](http://WWW.SACREDHEARTWR.ORG/PASTORAL-COUNCIL)





# Ministry Highlight - Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration



## Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration

**COME**, visit with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. His true presence is His most wondrous gift to us! He longs for our visits and blesses us abundantly for our love. Visit [sacredheartwr.weadorehim.com](http://sacredheartwr.weadorehim.com) or text **Willene Johnson at 478-335-3344** to schedule your holy hour. Eucharistic Adoration is open an hour before & after each Mass.



# Ministry Highlight - Knights of Columbus



## Knights of Columbus

### Mission

Many parishioners at Sacred Heart have heard “The Knights of Columbus are having a breakfast, or The Knights of Columbus are holding an Exemplification, or The Knights of Columbus are a “club” of older Catholic men.” All of these things are true, but it doesn’t even scratch the surface of the duties and promises that are practiced in our order. And you don’t have to be old to join.

Catholic men are eligible to join at the age of 18. Together, we’re empowering Catholic men to live their faith at home, in their parish, at work and in their community. Founded on the principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Knights of Columbus was established in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney, assistant pastor of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., and a group of parishioners. (You can see a beautiful picture of him in one of our stained-glass windows near the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.) Their intent? To bring financial aid and assistance to the sick, disabled and needy members and their families.

Today, Father McGivney is being considered for sainthood.

As stated above, the Knights of Columbus are based on 3 guiding principles; Charity, Faith and Fraternity.

Charity is at the heart of our work and our faith – and always has been. For the Knights of Columbus, charity means supporting a virtually boundless variety of projects.

Faith – Our commitment to charitable service is just one of the many ways that we express our Catholic faith. We’re here to build a daily bridge back to what matters, for our members and fellow Catholics.

Fraternity – With 2.1 million members around the world, we have been investing our time, effort and resources into our values of charity, unity and fraternity since 1882.

Here at Sacred Heart Church, the money we raise is spent on many ministries. For Example:

1. \$1300 went to the Christian Service Center to support the needy.
2. \$1860 went to the Houston County Special Olympics.
3. \$1000 went to support the FORMED program for the parishioners of Sacred Heart.
4. \$12000 went to the Building Fund for our Church.

And the list goes on. In conclusion, we are not just a bunch of older gentlemen hanging around. We’re involved in our community and would love for you to join our church community. You can contact us by email ([joedidigk4371@gmail.com](mailto:joedidigk4371@gmail.com)) or by phone (478-335-3311).





## Ministry Highlight – ministerio de ayuda a enfermos



Our Ministry "Aid to the sick" or "The Good Samaritan Ministry" is the newest Ministry in the Hispanic Community at Sacred Heart. We saw the need that our Hispanic elderly and sick currently have, specially being away from their countries and their families. We created this Ministry with the purpose of accompanying the sick and their families with the nearness of Christ through visits, prayer, Holy Communion, and fraternal support. Our mission is not only to bring the Church to the home, but also to bring the sick back into the heart of the community, so they may experience the companionship of the People of God and the joy of participating in Sunday Mass and parish life. We want every sick person to know that they are not alone, but united to the Body of Christ, which is the Church. We are looking for volunteers who can help us with this Ministry, if you feel the "call" please communicate with Melissa.



El Ministerio de ayuda al enfermo o "Del Buen Samaritano" es el ministerio mas joven que existe en nuestra comunidad hispana del Sagrado Corazon. Vimos la necesidad que existe en las personas mayores y enfermas, estando solas en este pais, y lejos de sus familias. Se creo este ministerio para acompañar a los enfermos y a sus familias con la cercanía de Cristo mediante visitas, oración, la Sagrada Comunión y apoyo fraterno. Nuestra misión no se limita a llevar la Iglesia al hogar, sino también a traer de nuevo a los enfermos al corazón de la comunidad, para que experimenten la compañía del Pueblo de Dios y la alegría de participar en la Misa dominical y en la vida parroquial. Queremos que cada persona enferma sienta que no está sola, sino unida al Cuerpo de Cristo que es la Iglesia. Actualmente estamos buscando voluntarios quienes nos puedan apoyar, si sientes la llamada, communicate con Melissa.

# THE STORY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



December 12th is the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We take a look at the story behind the indigenous peasant who came across the Patron of the Americas, and how he fought for her message to be heard.

By Francesca Merlo

The Virgin of Guadalupe, like the shroud of Turin, appears on a piece of fabric. Both are sacred objects, hundreds of years old, and both depict an image said to be miraculous. The Virgin of Guadalupe was declared Queen of Mexico and is Patron of the Americas.

First apparition Our Lady of Guadalupe first introduced herself as the Mother of God and the mother of all humanity when she appeared on the hill of Tepeyac in Mexico in 1531. An indigenous peasant, Juan Diego, saw a glowing figure on the hill. After she had identified herself to him, Our Lady asked that Juan build her a shrine in that same spot, in order for her to show and share her love and compassion with all those who believe. Afterwards, Juan Diego visited Juan de Zumárraga, who was Archbishop of what is now Mexico City. Zumárraga dismissed him in disbelief and asked that the future Saint provide proof of his story and proof of the Lady's identity.

Juan Diego returned to the hill and encountered Our Lady again. The Virgin told him to climb to the top of the hill and pick some flowers to present to the Archbishop.

Winter bloom, Although it was winter and nothing should have been in bloom, Juan Diego found an abundance of flowers of a type he had never seen before. The Virgin bundled the flowers into Juan's cloak, known as a tilma. When Juan Diego presented the tilma of exotic flowers to Zumárraga, the flowers fell out and he recognized them as Castilian roses, which are not found in Mexico. What was even more significant, however, was that the tilma had been miraculously imprinted with a colorful image of the Virgin herself. Tilma. This actual tilma, preserved since that date and showing the familiar image of the Virgin Mary with her head bowed and hands together in prayer, represents the Virgin of Guadalupe. It remains perhaps the most sacred object in all of Mexico. The story is best known from a manuscript written in the Aztec's native language Nahuatl by the scholar Antonio Valeriano. It was written sometime after 1556.

Over 20 million people visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe each year, now situated on the very same hill on which she appeared.

In 1990, Pope Saint John Paul II visited Mexico and beatified Juan Diego. 10 years later, in the year 2000, he was declared a Saint.

Source: VATICAN NEWS



# Did you know?



## Wedding Anniversary Jubilees

25th



50th

If you're having a Wedding Jubilee Anniversary (25th or 50th) and would like to have your names in the next issue of the Pastoral Council Newsletter, please email us at [parishcouncil@sacredheartwr.com](mailto:parishcouncil@sacredheartwr.com)

## Ready to Serve?

NEED SOMETHING TO DO? PLEASE JOIN US! CONSIDER SIGNING UP TO VOLUNTEER FOR ONE OR MANY OF OUR AWESOME CHURCH MINISTRIES AND SERVICES.

CHECK OUR MINISTRY PAGE ON THE  
THIS LINK.

[WWW.SACREDHEARTWR.ORG/MINISTRIES](http://WWW.SACREDHEARTWR.ORG/MINISTRIES)



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