LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST CONTROL YOUR HEARTS, THE PEACE INTO WHICH YOU WERE ALSO CALLED IN ONE BODY.

COLOSSIANS 3:15
REFLECTING ON GOD’S WORD

Could any period in history have been more difficult than the one in which we live when it comes to raising children, keeping marriages together, or maintaining ties among adult family members? Our whole culture often seems to be working against us. The Christmas season, especially, magnifies the differences between the values that we Catholic Christians hold and the values of the ordinary world. And not all the stresses are external. Many of our troubles arise from the differences among people within our families. Christmas can also exacerbate those internal tensions. Sometimes we just want to run away and hide from the dual struggle with the bad influences of the world and the strains of family life!

The feast of the Holy Family gives us much needed encouragement. The Gospel story shows Joseph and Mary fleeing to Egypt to keep Jesus safe, and then returning to Nazareth in Galilee to raise Him in their Jewish culture. Jesus was protected by His parents from danger of death. Yet they did not keep Him sequestered forever. As a child growing up, He lived out His call to holiness while dwelling in the midst of the Galilean Jewish community, with all its positive and negative influences. The readings from Sirach and Colossians illustrate how our own call to holiness can be lived out in our everyday lives. This feast reminds us that in Christ, the divine and the human, the holy and the ordinary have been forever linked. Whether it is in our nuclear family, our extended family, our parish family, the family of Christians, or the human family, today we celebrate the holiness that is to be found within our ordinary human families and communities.

—Virginia Stillwell

LIVING GOD’S WORD: The letter to the Colossians urges us to “put on love.” Does that motivate you to change the way you treat someone in your parish community, or to mend a rift with a member of your family?

Eucharistic Adoration - Join us on Thursdays anytime between 7:30AM-8PM. Please sign up for a 1/2 hour or a 1 hour segment by calling Cathy Kott at 630.393.9543.
**SALVATION IN DAILY LIFE**

This Sunday is the feast of the Holy Family, which comes on the first Sunday after Christmas Day. Today’s feast celebrates how the humanity of Jesus (including his entire family life) has brought saving significance into the daily rhythms of our human family life.

The scriptures offer instruction and encouragement on how to share—within our families, parish families, and the wider human family—the love that God shares with us in Jesus. Selections from Sirach, Psalm 128, and Colossians encourage us to reflect divine love and thus find holiness in all our human relationships. The reading from Matthew’s Gospel offers a living example of love in the actions Joseph took to protect his young family from danger and to nurture them within the larger family of faith of their time.

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**Part-time Administrative Position Available at St. Irene!**

A part-time administrative position is available in our Parish Office. Proficiency in Microsoft office and Publisher is required. Please contact our Business Manager at businessmanager@st-irene.org or x114 for more information.

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**2019 Charitable Giving Reports**

All parishioners who donated money or other gifts to the church or school will receive a report of those donations before January 31, 2020. These will be itemized to show all your gifts to the church, school, or its activities. When you receive this, please review and contact the office 630.393.2400 x 110 if you find information that does not agree with your records. We will work with you to reconcile that issue.

Donors using the WeShare will not receive a separate report from We Share. Those gifts will be reflected on the statement you receive from the parish.

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**Solemnity of Mary**

Wednesday, January 1 - 9AM Mass

**Epiphany**

Saturday, January 4 - 5PM Vigil Mass
Sunday, January 5 - 8AM & 10AM Masses

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December 29 - To anyone who imagines conflict between religion and politics to be a modern phenomenon, history witnesses otherwise. Martyred under Henry VIII in 1535, Thomas More declared, “I die the king’s good servant, but God’s first!” Thomas Becket could have said the same four centuries earlier. As Henry II’s closest friend and trusted chancellor, Becket, the king presumed, could be counted on, if made archbishop, to deliver the church to royal control. But Becket experienced a profound conversion, confirmed by the ordination liturgy’s rich symbolism of the bishop as Good Shepherd and the church as Bride of Christ. Renouncing secular responsibilities, distributing his wealth to the poor, Thomas became the church’s uncompromising champion. Faced with this “new” Becket, the king’s previous friendship turned into a ferocious, almost irrational hatred. As eight centuries later, Archbishop Romero would be martyred at the altar of Christ’s sacrifice, Becket was slain before the altar of Canterbury Cathedral by royal agents, neither the first nor last good shepherd to lay down his life as the price of freedom for Christ’s church and justice for Christ’s sheep.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.
Opportunities to become involved in the ministries of YOUR Church

Social Justice Ministry:
- Food Pantry

Education Ministry:
- Catechist/assistant: Pre-School
- Catechist/assistant: Elementary
- Catechist/assistant: Jr. High
- Catechist/assistant: High School
- Bible Study Facilitator

Formation Ministry:
- RCIA
- Baptism prep
- Baptism prep child care
- Marriage prep
- Small Christian Communities

Liturgical Ministry:
- Lector
- Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist
- Altar Server – Elementary/ Jr. High Level
- Altar Server – High School
- Altar Server - Adults
- Choir – Adults
- Children’s Liturgy of the Word Leaders/ Assistants/ Musicians
- Usher/ Greeter

Hospitality:
- Seniors LunchBunch Leader & Assistants
- New Parishioner Welcome Team
- Monthly Hospitality

Pastoral Ministry:
- Minister to the Homebound

YES! After prayerful consideration, I will help! (Please drop in collection.)

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________
Ministry: __________________________

Can’t find what you’re looking for? Phone Annette at 630.393.2400 x 122.
A Note of Appreciation - Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

The generosity of our parish and community never ceases to amaze. This year’s Knights of Columbus Share Your Soles Shoe Drive was a resounding success. We collected over 1,000 pairs of shoes that will be repurposed and sent to those in need. Boots that were collected are being sent to children in Flint, MI and to the Rosebud Indian Reservation in SD. Other shoes are being sent to the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Cameroon. We are sincerely grateful for your continued support of our charitable projects.

Happenings Around Town & the Diocese

2020 Lucky Calendar Program - Show your support for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. We invite you to participate in our annual 2020 Lucky Calendar Program. With your donation of $35 per calendar, you get 365 chances to win! For more information please call 630.892.2371 or email info@misacor-usa.org. Use them for a unique Christmas gift, birthday gift, thank you or thinking of you.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter - WWME begins with a private weekend experience with presentations about practical tools for growing in loving relationships, and continues with ongoing enrichments in the community after the weekend. WWME supports living in love! 2020 Marriage Enrichment Weekend Dates are:

♦ February 14-16 in Geneva
♦ February 22-23 in Crest Hill
♦ September 11-13 in Geneva
♦ October 24-25 in Mundelein

For reservations, or more information, please call 630.577.0778 or go to wwme-chicagoland.org.

Attention All Scouts - Female & Male - The Joliet Diocese Catholic Committee on Scouting invites you to our Annual Day of Recollection retreat on Saturday, February 29, 2020, from 9AM-1PM. The theme is Leap of Faith. The event will be held at The National Shrine and Museum of St. Therese, 8501 Bailey Rd., Darien, Illinois. The event is open to all registered American Heritage Girls, Boy Scouts, Brownies, Camp Fire Youth, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venturers. All ages invited! Activities will be age-appropriate. More information is available at www.dioceseofjoliet.org/scouting click on the ‘Day Of Recollection’ announcement banner on the front page. While there, check out the Early Bird Registration Discount!

Joyful Again Widowed Ministry - The Joyful Again! program brings understanding and hope to help you on your new life’s journey. “I felt welcome.” “Found hope.” “Am more at peace.” Please join us at one of the following events which are designed to help the widowed sort out challenges and learn to find joy in living again, while treasuring memories of their spouse.

♦ March 14 & 15 - Mt. Assisi Center in Lemont

For more information or to register contact us at Joyful Again! Widowed Ministry at 708.354.7211. Email: joyfulagain7211@gmail.com Website: www.joyfulagain.org

Healing Horizons is a grief support group. We welcome those in all stages of grief to interact with others in similar situations. We are a comfortable, confidential and safe place where you can express what you feel. We do so from a Christian perspective to help our members make some sense of what has happened in their lives. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month from 6:30-8PM in the ACL.

Reporting Incidents of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a sin and a crime. Victims of sexual abuse should first contact civil authorities (local police and/or Illinois Department of Child and Family Services at 1.800.25ABUSE). Then, if the allegation involves a priest or other agent of the Church, contact the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 815.263.6467.
This Week’s Meetings

- **Sunday, December 29**
- **Monday, December 30**
- **Tuesday, December 31**
- **Wednesday, January 1**
- **Thursday, January 2**
- **Friday, January 3**
- **Saturday, January 4**
- **Sunday, January 5**

Chili Cook-Off

**Saturday, February 8, 2020**

6-10:30PM

St. Irene Activity Center

Sponsored by the St. Irene Athletic Association

Your $10 ticket buys you samples of all of the delicious chili offerings. This is a 21-and-older event. Hot dogs, soft drinks, beer and wine will be available for sale. You will also have an opportunity to bid on fabulous silent auction items, enter raffles for great prizes and compete in the Liquor Loop. There will be a 50/50 raffle this year with tickets sold after Masses.

PLEASE CONSIDER BEING A CONTESTANT (AGAIN) THIS YEAR. The success of the Chili Cook-Off continues to depend on GREAT CONTESTANTS LIKE YOU! Each contestant will receive a variety of thank you gifts, including a $50 cash reimbursement toward their chili expenses! Rules for the Cook-Off will be forwarded when you sign up. Contact Scott Reid or Shannon Nevins if you or your organization would like to be a contestant and enter your favorite chili recipe. It's A LOT OF fun! (But enter early - the number of contestants had to be limited last year!)

ALSO CONSIDER BEING A SPONSOR OR MAKING A RAFFLE OR MONETARY DONATION. We are looking for sponsors and monetary donations, as well as raffle and silent auction items (no amount is too small)! Contact Scott Reid or Shannon Nevins if you or your company can make a donation or would like additional information on how to donate.

PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING IN ANY WAY. All proceeds benefit St. Irene School ~ but the fun of the evening benefits all who attend and contribute!

FOR INFORMATION & TO SIGN UP, CONTACT:
- Scott Reid - S.Reid@st-ireneschool.org
- Shannon Nevins - Shannon.nevins23@gmail.com

Liturgy of the Word for Children

Liturgy of the Word for Children takes place on Sundays during the school year at the 10AM Mass. Children in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are invited to leave the assembly before the readings begin to participate in their own Word Service. They hear the readings, have their own homily, pray the Creed and the General Intercessions in language they can understand and then return to the assembly during the preparation hymn.
St. Irene Vocation Prayer

In every age Lord, You raise up women and men who are strong in their faith and bold in their actions to give witness to the Gospel. Fill St. Irene Parish Community with Your Spirit and give us a burning desire to make a difference in our world. Because of our love for You, Bless our Church with holy and courageous priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, devoted married couples, dedicated single men and women, and enthusiastic youth. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Parish Office is closed for Christmas Break and will reopen on Thursday, January 2nd at 8:30AM.

Readings for the Week

Monday: 1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36-40
Tuesday: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18
Wednesday: Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
Thursday: 1 Jn 2:22-28; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 1:19-28
Friday: 1 Jn 2:29-3:6; Ps 98:1, 3cd-6; Jn 1:29-34
Saturday: 1 Jn 3:7-10; Ps 98:1, 7-9; Jn 1:35-42
Sunday: Is 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

Liturgical Calendar

Monday, December 30
6th Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

7:00AM - Loretta Paver / Family

Tuesday, December 31
St. Sylvester I

7:00AM - St. Irene Faith Community

Wednesday, January 1
Mary, the Holy Mother of God

9:00AM - Bollweg Family / Friends

Thursday, January 2
Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen

7:00AM - Savatore Alleruzzo/ Morgenthal Family

7:30AM - Eucharistic Adoration

Friday, January 3
The Most Holy Name of Jesus; First Friday

Saturday, January 4
Vigil: The Epiphany of the Lord

5:00PM - Peggy Vitale / Friends

Sunday, January 5
The Epiphany of the Lord

8:00AM - Lance and Gloria Robinson / Friends
10:00AM - Hal Dirienzo/ Tom & Pat McHugh
Joseph Voegtle/ Family
Josephine Finnocchiaro/ Mary Mickel
Shirley Cosgrove - 93rd Birthday

Lance CPL Jeff Sommer - Camp Fuji, Japan
Chief Petty Officer Michael Spans
Capt. Weston J. Umano USAF - Deployed
E3 Jacob VanderMeulen, USNavy, San Diego
1st Class Patrick Reid - Lackland AFB, TX
Master Sgt. Dan Peterson - Anchorage, AK
TSgt. Daniel Geinosky - serving in England
Sgt. Christian Wilkins - stationed in Iraq
Sgt. Levi Dieter - Embassy in Equador
Cmdr. Eric G. Peterson - Serving in San Diego
Sgt. Peter Folz - Fort Bragg, North Carolina
Major Patrick Looby - Kunsan AB, S.K.
Sgt. Thomas Rasplicka - Fort Bliss, Texas

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St. Irene Catholic Church is on Facebook! Please “like” St. Irene Catholic Church to receive the latest information on news, events and parish ministries.