



ST. MARY OUR MOTHER CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Our Mother is a Catholic community committed to the spiritual growth of all people as we share our faith and serve our community.



816 West Broad Street, Horseheads, New York
(607) 739-3817

December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of **ADVENT**



WEEKLY CALENDAR:**Saturday, December 26**

3:30 p.m. —Sacrament of Penance—church

PARISH OFFICES CLOSED

The Parish Offices will be closed from **Tuesday, December 24** through **Friday, December 27th** in observance of the Christmas holidays. The offices will re-open on Monday, December 30th at 9:00 a.m. We wish all a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

MEMORIALS:

The Eucharistic Hosts, Sacramental Wine and Icon Candle for the week of December 22-28, 2024 have been donated in loving memory of Phillip Amisano by his family.

IN THE PEACE OF CHRIST:

John Kearney
Donald Salvatore
Mary Kay Vargo

**PARISH CALENDARS!**

Our calendars have arrived! Thank you to the Lynch Funeral home for our 2025 parish calendars!

Thank you, Jim

DISCOVER THE RESCUE PROJECT—A perfect format for young parents to seniors with a computer.

Do you feel at times that God has forgotten you? Many factors we live with may increase chaos and despair in our lives. The **Rescue Project**, created by Fr. John Riccardi and Acts XXIX, is here to change that. Experience the power of the Gospel like never before—Jesus' victory over sin, death, and despair—and discover the truth: **God loves you and has a plan to rescue you!** Join us for an 8-week, *online* experience starting January 2025. Through powerful videos, thought-provoking discussions, we'll explore how God's love and mercy was always there in your life. Accessible on-line from the comfort of your home. It's perfect for anyone seeking renewal and hope. Learn more and register today at www.stnycatholic.com/

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE**SACRAMENT OF PENANCE**

Saturday: 3:30 p.m.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT MASSES**Saturday, December 21**

5:00 p.m.—Mass —Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 22

8:30 a.m. —Mass—Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m.—Mass—Fourth Sunday of Advent

CHRISTMAS MASSES**Tuesday, December 24, 2024**

3:00 p.m.—Christmas Family Mass

5:00 p.m.—Christmas Mass

9:30 p.m.—Adult Choral Concert

10:00 p.m.—Christmas Mass During the Night
(formerly known as “Midnight Mass”)**Wednesday, December 25, 2024**

9:00 a.m.—Christmas Mass

Blessing of Christmas gifts at Christmas Morning Mass

No Mass on Thursday, December 26th.

HOLY FAMILY

Saturday/Sunday-December 28/29, 2024

*Regular weekend Mass Schedule***NEW YEAR'S EVE/DAY MASSES****Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God****Tuesday, December 31, 2024**

5:00 p.m.—Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Wednesday, January 1, 2025

9:00 a.m.—Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

No Mass on January 2, 2025

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY

Saturday/Sunday—January 4/5, 2025

Regular Weekend Schedule

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:

Happy Fourth Sunday of Advent and Merry Christmas! I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a Blessed and Merry Christmas! I feel blessed in my ministry as your pastor and join you in thanking God for the many ways we are blessed as the parish community of Saint Mary Our Mother.

I extend to all an invitation to our Christmas liturgies. These liturgies invite you to listen to the story of our salvation. The Christmas message is the story of God's unconditional love for us. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to fill this world with the many other stories that mirror and give witness to God's love for us. This is the meaning and the wonder of the Incarnation. Please plan now to join us for Mass on Christmas.

Many schools have a time honored tradition of presenting a Christmas program. These programs feature the school's students performing and singing some of the traditional songs of this season. This past week, St. Mary Our Mother School presented their annual Christmas program entitled "A Christmas Carol." Each year, our school's Christmas program always emphasizes "the real reason for the season".

Some good friends shared with me the following story about a school Christmas program, which has an interesting point.

THE "W" IN CHRISTMAS

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations—extensive card writing, endless baking, decoration and even overspending. Yet still, I found my self exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas. My son, Nicholas was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old.

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise. So, the morning of the dress rehearsal I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quickly scampering to their seats.

As I waited, the students were led to the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas" I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer. So when my son's class rose to sing, "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK:

Monday, 6:45 A.M. **December 23, Late Advent Weekday**
Our Faithful Departed

Tuesday, 6:45 A.M. **December 24, Late Advent Weekday**
NO MASS
Family Mass—For all families of St. Mary Our Mother
Family Mass—For all families of St. Mary Our Mother
5:00 P.M. **"Mass in the Night"**—For all families of St. Mary Our Mother

10:00 P.M. **December 25, The Nativity of the Lord**
For all families of St. Mary Our Mother

Wednesday, 9:00 A.M. **December 26, St. Stephen, Martyr**
NO MASS

Thursday, 6:45 A.M. **December 27, St. John, Apostle**
Joseph Autorina—Steve & Jackie Romanki

Friday, 6:45 A.M. **December 28, St. Elizabeth Seton**
Lynda Seeley—Cindy & Charlie Ellis

Saturday, 5:00 P.M. **December 29, The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**
Father Robert MacNamara—the Dobek's

Sunday, 8:30 A. M. **10:30 A.M.** Marie & Arthur Maio—Su Ann, Arthur, Richard and Steve

Pastor's Perspective Continued

Nicholas was aglow, as were all his classmates, adorned with fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snow caps upon their heads. Those in the front row—center stage—held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing "C" is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H is for Happy", and on and on, until each child holding up their portion had presented the complete message, "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we notice her: a small, quiet girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down—totally unaware her letter "M" appeared as a "W".

The audience of the first through sixth graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, as she stood tall, proudly holding her "W". Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities. For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

"CHRIST WAS LOVE"

And, I believe He still is!

On behalf of the entire staff of Saint Mary Our Mother Parish and School, I wish you and yours a very **Merry Christmas!**

Fr. L.



JUBILEE 2025: PILGRIMS OF HOPE



In May 2024 Pope Francis announced the Ordinary Jubilee Year of 2025 with the theme Pilgrims of Hope. The Jubilee Year will begin on the vigil of the Lord’s Nativity, Dec. 24, 2024 in Rome and will conclude on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord—January 6, 2026. The Jubilee Year is a significant moment in the life of the church proclaimed every 25 years since the thirteenth century and typically includes pilgrimages, processions, celebrations of Mass, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The liturgical celebrations are opportunities to receive the Lord’s mercy, especially through the Jubilee indulgence, and lead us to the performance of the work of mercy.

ST. MARY OUR MOTHER SCHOOL:

As we prepare to celebrate the joyous season of Christmas, I wish to extend heartfelt wishes from St. Mary Our Mother School to each of you. This season reminds us of the profound gift of Christ’s birth and the love and hope He brings into our lives.

We are deeply grateful for the prayers, generosity, and unwavering support you provide to our school community. Your kindness enables us to continue our mission of nurturing students in faith, knowledge, and service. On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of St. Mary Our Mother School, I wish you and your loved ones a blessed and peaceful Christmas season. May the light of Christ fill your hearts and homes with joy, and may the New Year bring abundant blessings. Merry Christmas!

In Gratitude,
Mrs. Heather Bill
Principal, St. Mary Our Mother School

RICE BOWL DONATIONS RETURNED TO SERVE THE HORSEHEADS AREA:

Last spring, our parishioners of St. Mary Our Mother and the students and their families of our school donated \$3,256 to Catholic Relief Service through the Rice Bowl Program. Twenty-five percent of that amount (\$813.93) was recently sent on by CRS to our local outreach program, the Horseheads Food Pantry. This money will be of great assistance to our pantry in purchasing meat, fresh food, and other items from the Food Bank during the winter months.

Thank you all for your generosity in helping those in need of assistance, both globally and locally. It is much needed and appreciated.

MINISTERIAL STAFF

- Rev. Christopher E. Linsler, Pastor
- Rev. Peter T. Singano, in Residence
- Miss Lily Barr, Faith Formation Assistant
- Mrs. Cathy Peckham, Director of Music
- Mrs. Heather Bill, Principal
- Mrs. Adriana Enright, School Secretary
- Michelle Card, Business Manager
- Mrs. Joyce Pirozzolo, Parish Secretary
- Ms. Wendy Slater, Office Assistant
- Mr. Doug Johnson, Cemetery Manager
- Mrs. Barbara Matterazzo, Bulletin Editor
- Ms. Jenna Crandall, Maintenance
- Mr. Roger Williams, Maintenance

PASTORAL COUNCIL

- Mr. Vincent Moschetti, Chairperson
- Mrs. Richelle Riina, Recording Secretary

CONTACT INFORMATION

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- 816 West Broad Street(607)-739-3817
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- Parish Web Site.....www.StMaryOurMother.com
- St. Mary Our Mother School
- 811 Westlake Street(607)-739-9157
- E-mail.....smoms@dor.org
- School
- Web Site.....www.stmaryourmother.school
- Faith Formation Office
- 816 West Broad Street(607)-739-8214

NOTRE DAME RETREAT HOUSE EVENTS:

January 10-12—Men & Women— The 12 Steps & Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. “The Journey From Reformation to Transformation” w/Fr. Gerry McKeon, S.H.

CORE RETREAT WEEKENDS:

Men’s weekends: January 17-19 and January 31-February 2

Couple’s weekend: February 28-March 2

Women’s weekends: May 2-4 and May 16-18

January 14th—“Reading God: the Practice of Lectio Divina” with Fr. Edison Tayag

February 11th—“A Seat at the Table”- with The Catholic Black Coalition

GOSPEL MEDITATION:**December 25, 2024
The Nativity of the Lord**

In one of my assignments as a priest I was asked to provide administrative oversight to a rather large Church operation with massive financial, legal, and personnel challenges. When I began, I felt overwhelmed and unqualified. Someone said to me, “You are totally unqualified for this work.” The unfeeling truth of it stung. Reeling and upset, I reached out to my predecessor, who said, “Your job is to bring Jesus into every situation. Let everyone else be the experts in all the other stuff.” It was so liberating. My lack of qualifications actually became an asset because it grounded me in the truth of Jesus alone and not in my own skill.

Do you ever feel unqualified to be a messenger of Jesus to the world? The shepherds in the Gospel account of Jesus’ birth were part of a scorned and despised class in those days, not unlike prostitutes and tax collectors. They were not competent and respected citizens. And *they* are the ones who are approached by angels and invited to see Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. They ignore their lack of qualifications and announce what they’ve seen and heard about the newborn king.

So, it goes with us. When it comes to the things of God and angels, we are as incompetent and unlikely as shifty shepherds. Until, that is, we behold the glory of the newborn king, which we do in the Christmas liturgy. May the revelation to us of Christ’s birth this Christmas overwhelm our insecurities and make the likes of us the most unlikely heralds of our king.

— Father John Muir

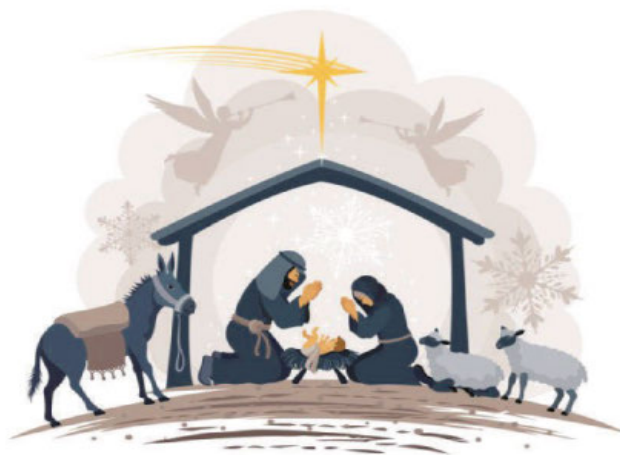
GOSPEL MEDITATION: 4th Sunday of Advent

The Blessed Virgin teaches us the secret to being blessed, happy, and full of joy. When Elizabeth, her cousin, greets her, she calls Mary “blessed” for two reasons, her motherhood of Jesus, and Our Lady’s belief that “there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord” (Luke 1:45). Mary is “blessed” entirely because of her relationship to the Incarnation of God in Jesus, and for no other. This of course makes perfect sense, because as the Lord, as God-in-the-flesh, her Son is the source of all blessedness, life, and joy. Mary is blessed because of her contact with Jesus, and by her faith in Him.

So, it is with us, too. We become blessed by our “motherly” contact with Christ in our souls through baptism. He lives in us and grows to maturity within us. We bear Him to the world. This requires unshakeable faith that His promises to us will be fulfilled, despite all the problems and difficulties that plague us. We become blessed, happy, and joyful in the measure that we are in contact with Jesus and trust in Him.

Advent challenges: 1.) This week go to someone who has shared the love of Jesus with you and tell her or him how they have been a blessing to you. 2.) Name someone in your life now to whom God has sent you to bring Jesus’ presence. Pray: “Lord, thank you for the blessing of sending me to bring your presence to this person. Help me bear you faithfully to him/her.”

Father John Muir



For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him.

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