



Today is a double feast so to speak, but the two feasts are closely associated. This is the Octave Day of Christmas, or the eighth day of Christmas. It always falls exactly one week after Christmas Day; Christmas Day is of course the first day, and then when we count to eight, we have today. "Octaves" have been celebrated in the Church in relation to Holy days and feasts almost from the very beginnings of the Church.

However, today is also the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. In Jewish tradition a male child was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. On that same day the child was officially given his name. Thus, it was on this day that the Lord received the name Jesus. The third connection of these two liturgical celebrations is the addition of calling our Blessed Mother the Mother of God. Among Vatican II documents it is clearly stated, "Clearly from earliest times the Blessed Virgin is honored under the title of Mother of God."

This feast is naturally a celebration of Mary's motherhood of Jesus. It stems from the Greek word theotokos that translates as "She who gave birth to God." That title was adopted at the First Council of Ephesus, held in the summer of 431 AD. Ephesus is in present day Turkey, and this was a gathering of Bishops; the Nicene Creed is another product of that Council.

Our First Reading from the Book of Numbers is familiar to most of us because of its inclusion of the prayer of Aaron that we may have experienced often within our lives as Catholics and Christians. Stewardship helps us understand and appreciate that we are gifted by God. What greater gift can we have beyond "The Lord let His face shine upon you"? To be aware that God may look upon us and be pleased, not because of who we are or what we may have done, but because we are in Jesus Christ, might be the largest source of peace and power in our lives. However, we need to realize that, and we need to live our lives as that is the reality.

Three times within this blessing we hear "The Lord." In the first it is God the Father who blesses His children; then it is God the Son whose face shines upon us and brings us grace; finally, it is God the Holy Spirit who communicates to us the feelings of God, and Who gives us peace as a result. There are no accidents in Scripture, and this threefold blessing from our three Gods in One is no accident either.

In St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, our Second Reading, Paul states "God sent His Son, born of a woman." That simple statement ties together with today's feasts as well as to the initial reading and the Gospel message. Jesus came not just as God's Son, but also as one born to a woman. Being "born of a woman" is a somewhat veiled confirmation of our belief in a virgin birth represented by the Immaculate Conception. Although Jesus called Himself consistently the Son of Man, Paul never states that Christ was born of a man and a woman. He was born of a woman with God as the Father. Paul, too, seems to confirm that Mary is truly the Mother of God.

Everything we celebrate today is brought to completion and to coordination by the Gospel Reading from St. Luke. As is often the case in these reflections, this reading is so rich in content and meaning there is no way we can truly do it justice in this short space. However, focusing on a specific statement within it often helps us explain it. It is the last few verses that put it all together: "When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by an angel before he was conceived in the womb." There we find the Octave of Christmas (eight days) and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mother of God.

The next verse from Luke speaks to "When the days were completed for their purification"... What a strong reference to the Octave of Christmas as well as to the Motherhood of God by Mary. It does not say "his" purification, but "their" purification. Mary, the Mother of God, and Jesus, the Son of God, were both pure.

YOUR STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

December 25, 2022

Sunday Collection	\$ 8,792.31
Vigil Candles.....	\$ 157.53
Facilities Improvement.....	\$ 12.00
Christmas Offering.....	\$ 962.00
Assumption Seminary.....	\$ 415.64
Mass Intentions.....	\$ 110.00
Donations.....	\$ 8.00
Christmas Flowers.....	\$ 10.00

**Second Collection - January 8:
Helping Hands Fund**



A NEW-YEAR'S WISH:

During this most holy time of the year, my prayer is that the Christ Child and His Mother, Mary Most Holy, continue to bless our parish and each of you throughout the coming year.

May 2023 be a year where we all walk in God's way!
*On behalf of our Parish Staff, Deacons, School Faculty and Staff, and all our various Organizations and Ministries... **Happy New Year!...** and **God Bless...***

Know that you are all in my prayers.

Fr. Mike

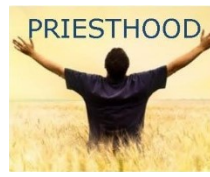
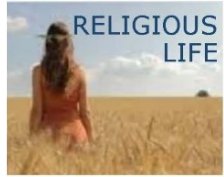
LIFE AWARENESS

Religious Vocation Discernment Weekend

Life Awareness is a retreat event that provides time and space for single men and women to discern a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life.

The event brings participants (ages 18-40) together with priests and religious brothers and sisters, for a weekend of lectures, group discussions, private consultations and prayer.

The objective of the retreat is to help participants develop a realistic view of what it's like to serve God and the Church in today's world.



The 2023 Life Awareness Retreat will take place at the Cordi-Marian Retreat Center on **February 3 - 5, 2023**

If you are a person who is:

- Looking for an opportunity to provide service to others,
- Wondering if the religious life as a Priest, Brother or Sister might be what you're looking for, or...
- Even if you haven't reached that point, but you have that quiet, subtle, nagging feeling that this is something you should know more about... Then... ***This is for YOU!***

This retreat is sponsored by the San Antonio Archdiocesan Vocation Office. The Archbishop's appeal is generously covering all expenses for this retreat.

Therefore, it is free for participants.

Register Today!



Life Awareness es un evento de retiro que proporciona tiempo y espacio para que hombres y mujeres solteros discernan una vocación al sacerdocio o a la vida consagrada.

El evento reúne a los participantes (de 18 a 40 años) con sacerdotes y hermanos y hermanas religiosos, para un fin de semana de conferencias, discusiones grupales, consultas privadas y oración.

El objetivo del retiro es ayudar a los participantes a desarrollar una visión realista de lo que es servir a Dios y a la Iglesia en el mundo de hoy.



El Retiro de Life Awareness 2023 tendrá lugar en el Centro de Retiros Cordi-Marian ***el Febrero 3 - 5, 2023***

Si usted es una persona que:

- Buscando una oportunidad para prestar servicio a los demás,
- Preguntarse si la vida religiosa como sacerdote, hermano o hermana podría ser lo que estás buscando, o...
- Incluso si no has llegado a ese punto, pero tienes esa sensación tranquila, sutil y persistente de que esto es algo sobre lo que deberías saber más ... Entonces... ***¡Esto es para ti!***

Este retiro es patrocinado por la Oficina Arquidiocesana de Vocaciones de San Antonio. La petición del arzobispo cubre generosamente todos los gastos de este retiro.

Por lo tanto, es gratuito para los participantes.

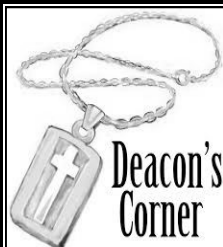
40 DAYS FOR LIFE 365

40 Days for Life is a focused pro-life campaign with a vision to access God's power through prayer, fasting, and peaceful vigil to end abortion in America.

With 40 Days for Life 365, you can sign up to pray on the sidewalk any day of the year! Abortion may be gone here in San Antonio, but our prayers are still needed to change the hearts and minds of the abortion-minded.

Vigil Location: Planned Parenthood abortion clinic; 2140 Babcock Rd. San Antonio, TX

To Sign up, Visit: <https://www.40daysforlife.com/en/sanantonio>



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

If you're anything like me you've probably got the best of intentions but you just don't quite get around to everything you'd like to. *Sound familiar?*
Seems many people live by the motto 'Never do today what can be put off until tomorrow.' That philosophy -procrastination- may seem pretty cool until you realize our '*tomorrows*' are not unlimited! We have to begin somewhere... so why not make this coming year, 2023, the year where it all begins!

Some things may seem small and inconsequential... like:

"Yes, dear, I'll rake the leaves... well... *maybe next week*" -or-

"I'll nail that loose fence board... *one of these days*" -or-

"I'll wash the car... *maybe tomorrow... looks like rain.*"

You can add your own list....

These may seem trivial and many / most probably are... but they're good practice for the bigger '*stuff*.'

Force yourself to get up and do them... and do them with a smile!

Anything / Everything you do can be a prayer!..

As long as you do them with the proper intent and disposition of heart.

Practice on the little things... and the more important items like: "*I really need to get to Confession,*" -or- "*Maybe I should attend the Holy Hour this month,*" -or- "*I'll bet I could help out with our Religious-Ed program... I could share my faith with the youth of our parish...*" will come easier.

Stop procrastinating on the little things and you'll find the practice will carry over to the more important things as well. ***May 2023 be the year we give up our procrastinating ways and begin doing the things we plan to do.***

'till next time... God Bless- DT

***** Contribution Envelopes *****

After citing *Paper Shortages* and *Employee Turnover* as the reason for an expected delay on delivery, our supplier came through and was able to deliver our Contribution-Envelope order this week!

We apologize for the inconvenience if you were not able to receive/pick up your box of envelopes before January 1st.

Envelopes are located on a table at the main entrance to the Church. They are arranged by last name alphabetical order. Please pick up your envelopes as soon as possible! *Again, We apologize for the inconvenience.*

Next weekend (January 8th) we celebrate the **Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord.**

An interesting side-note on the Magi and when that first Epiphany occurred...

That first Epiphany (*or first Christmas if you look at them bringing presents*) occurred on December 25th in the year 2 B.C. when Jesus was a toddler of about 2 years of age.

Questions? Where did I come up with that date? *Buy* me a free cup of coffee at the next KC Breakfast and we can talk about it...

There is a special house blessing associated with the Feast of the Epiphany. Traditionally, a home is blessed by the Head of the Household on the feast day... but the blessing may be performed at other times as well. *More about that next week.*

Question: If God is eternal and infinite, how can He have a mother?

Why do we call Mary the *Mother of God*... and not just the *mother of Jesus*?

Answer: The title of "Mary, Mother of God" can be confusing.

We aren't implying that Mary existed from eternity or that she is divine herself.

We aren't promoting some kind of Marian superpowers. The Church has fought for this title throughout the centuries for one simple reason: ***Christ's identity is at stake.***

As the Church grew in the early centuries, theologians wrestled with what it meant for Jesus to be both God and man. Many distortions of his identity began to emerge. One of these was propagated by a man named Nestorius.

Nestorius and his followers denied that Jesus' human nature and his divine nature were inseparable.

Following that logic, Mary could have only conceived Jesus' human nature. But people don't give birth to a "nature."

They give birth to a whole person. For Jesus, his whole person is both human and divine.

In 431 A.D. the Council of Ephesus denounced Nestorius.

The bishops affirmed that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine and proclaimed Mary Theotokos.

Translating the Greek to English, Theotokos means "God-bearer."

Note that this isn't "God-generator" or "God-creator."

Mary bore Jesus, God and man, in her womb and gave him birth.

She is mother to the whole person, the whole Jesus, and therefore Mother of God.

This Week at Our Parish

Sunday, January 1, 2023 - New Year's Day
 10:00 am KC 3rd Degree Corporate Mass - Church

Monday, January 2, 2023
 *** Parish Offices Closed ***
 12:00 pm Daily Holy Hour (12 - 1p) - Church

Tuesday, January 3, 2023
 12:00 pm Daily Holy Hour (12 - 1p) - Church
 5:30 pm Divine Mercy - Rectory Mtg Room
 6:30 pm Coro Alegria Choir Practice - Rectory Mtg Room
 7:00 pm Grupo de Oracion Choir Practice - Church

Wednesday, January 4, 2023
 10:30 am Charismatic Core Group Meeting - RMR
 12:00 pm Daily Holy Hour (12 - 1p) - Church
 6:30 pm KC 3rd Degree Officers Meeting - Carolan Hall
 7:00 pm Guadalupanos Choir Practice - Church

Thursday, January 5, 2023
 12:00 pm Daily Holy Hour (12 - 1p) - Church
 6:00 pm Holy Hour / January - Church
 Charismatic Prayer Group - Church
 7:00 pm RCIA - Rectory Mtg Room

Friday, January 6, 2023
 12:00 pm Daily Holy Hour (12 - 1p) - Church
 6:30 pm Guitar / Choir Practice - Rectory Mtg Room
 7:00 pm Grupo de Oracion - Church

Saturday, January 7, 2023
 4:00 pm Reconciliation - Church
 Cenaculo de la Divina Misericordia - RMR

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 31, 2022 - New Year's Eve
 8:00 am **STM Parishioners - Living and Deceased**
 5:00 pm †Joe Ramirez by Edward Ramirez
 †Roxanne & Jeremy Espinoza by Mom, Dad & Family

Sunday, January 1, 2023 - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
 8:00 am Ramon Mata Jr. - **Healing and Good Health**
 10:00 am †Medardo E. and Evangelina G. Morales
 by Morales-Briseno Families
 †Bob, Gloria, and Inga Garcia by Vicky Smith
 12:00 pm †Kathryn Sweet by Maria T. Sweet

Monday, January 2, 2023
 8:00 am †Ralph W Garcia, Jr by Rosa Saldiva
Birthday - Andy Saldiva by Mom

Tuesday, January 3, 2023
 8:00 am †Al Weinheimer by Carolyn Weinheimer

Wednesday, January 4, 2023
 8:00 am †Kathryn Marie Sweet by Maria T. Sweet
 †Gregory & Melba Tatum by Alfredo & Irma Sanchez

Thursday, January 5, 2023 (Communion Svc)
 8:00 am †Kathryn Marie Sweet by Maria T. Sweet
All Ordained Clergy and Religious

Friday, January 6, 2023
 8:00 am †Patricia E. Butts by Sisters

Saturday, January 7, 2023
 8:00 am **STM Parishioners - Living and Deceased**
 5:00 pm †Christine C. Dominguez by Dominguez Family
Birthday - Olivia Grace Mata by Mata Family

Sunday, January 8, 2023
 8:00 am **Health & Recovery of Deacon Rolando**
 10:00 am †Salome H. Briseno and Carolina B. Briseno
 by Morales-Briseno Families
 †Bob, Gloria, and Inga Garcia by Vicky Smith
 12:00 pm †Bernardo Hernandez by Hernandez Family
STM Parishioners - Living and Deceased



Lecturas de la Semana del 2 - 8 enero

Lunes: 1Jn 2:22-28; Sal 97:2-4; Jn 1:19-28
Martes: 1Jn 2:29-3:6; Sal 97:1,3-6; Jn 1:29-34
Miércoles: 1Jn 3:7-10; Sal 97:1,7-9; Jn 1:35-42
Jueves: 1Jn 3:11-21; Sal 99:1-5; Jn 1:43-51
Viernes: 1Jn 5:5-13; Sal 147:12-15,19-20;
 Mc 1:7-11
Sábado: 1Jn 5:14-21; Sal 149:1-6,9; Jn 2:1-11
Domingo: Is 60:1-6; Sal 71:1-2,7-8,10-13;
 Ef 3:2-3,5-6; Mt 2:1-12

Readings for the week of Jan 2 - 8

Monday: 1Jn 2:22-28; Ps 98:2-4; Jn 1:19-28
Tuesday: 1Jn 2:29-3:6; Ps 98:1,3-6; Jn 1:29-34
Wednesday: 1Jn 3:7-10; Ps 98:1,7-9; Jn 1:35-42
Thursday: 1Jn 3:11-21; Ps 100:1b-5; Jn 1:43-51
Friday: 1Jn 5:5-13; Ps 147:12-15,19-20;
 Mk 1:7-11
Saturday: 1Jn 5:14-21; Ps 149:1-6a,9b; Jn 2:1-11
Sunday: Is 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-2,7-8,10-13;
 Eph 3:2-3a,5-6; Mt 2:1-12

Liturgical Roles

Saturday, January 7, 2023
 5 pm Altar Servers - (None)
 Eucharistic Ministers - T.Sweet, B.McQueen,
 M.Fisher, R.Alvarado
 Lector - T.Guerrero

Sunday, January 8, 2023
 8 am Altar Servers - (None)
 Eucharistic Ministers - R.Saldiva, P.Klar, T.S.Garza, B.Dausin
 Lector - E.Sandoval

10 am Altar Servers - (Volunteers)
 Eucharistic Ministers - P+R.Mendoza, J+And.Perez, N.Rodriguez
 Lector - W.Torres

12 pm Altar Servers - (Volunteers)
 Eucharistic Ministers - M.Pina, D+F.Malacara, I.Hernandez,
 R.Borrogo, A.Chavez
 Lector - E.Licon / L.Lopez