

Fourth Sunday
of Advent

22 Dec 2013

Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA



what's coming

december

22 Sunday, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Coffee and Donuts after morning Masses. (Thurman Brisben Center)
Christmas Card and SCRIP Sales after Masses.
No CYM Dinner or Youth Group tonight.

23 Monday, Advent Weekday (St. John of Kanty, priest)

No Religious Education Classes until January 6.
10am, Legion of Mary, Room 100, Parish Life Center.
7pm, Advent Confessions, church.
7pm, Las Posadas, Parish Life Center.
8pm, Young Adults Group, John Paul II House.

24 Tuesday, Advent Weekday

Parish Offices Closed. Mass schedule on page 6.

25 Wednesday, The Nativity of the Lord

Parish Offices Closed. Mass schedule on page 6.

26 Thursday, St. Stephen, the first martyr

Parish Offices Closed.

27 Friday, St. John, apostle and evangelist

28 Saturday, The Holy Innocents, martyrs

29 Sunday, The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

No Coffee Shop this weekend.

30 Monday, Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

10am, Legion of Mary, Room 100, Parish Life Center.
8:15pm, Young Adult Ministry meeting, John Paul II House.

31 Tuesday, Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord (St. Sylvester I, pope)

6pm, Vigil Mass for Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Church.

january

1 Wednesday, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Parish Offices Closed.

Mass Schedule for Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. *A Holy Day of Obligation.*
7am, 8:30am, 10:30am, 12:30pm and 2pm (Mass in Spanish)
8pm, Legion of Mary, Room 100, Parish Life Center.

2 Thursday, Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, bishops and doctors of the church

9:30am, Adult Bible Study, Courtyard Meeting. *Class is full, keep on eye on bulletin for future classes.*
7pm, Baptism Preparation Class, Room 204, Parish Life Center. Pre-registration required.
7pm, Spanish Prayer Group, John Paul II House.

3 Friday, The Most Holy Name of Jesus

8pm, First Friday Mass, church. All-night Eucharistic Adoration immediately following.

4 Saturday, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious

2:30pm, Baptism Class in Spanish, Room 204, Parish Life Center.
SCRIP Sales after 5pm Mass.



**saint
mary**
of the
IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION
Roman Catholic Church



this week's
bulletin:

5
catholic
education

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operations

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education

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parish life

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outreach

nota bene (*note well, please*):

- ☞ Please see our **Christmas Mass Schedule** on page 6 of today's bulletin.
- ☞ **SCRIP is on sale** in the Parish Life Center after all Masses except Saturday 7pm and Sunday 2pm. SCRIP makes great stocking stuffers! Please use SCRIP, and a percentage of what you spend will be applied to our school.
- ☞ Our Mass schedule for the Holy Day of Obligation on January 1st, **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God** is incorrect in the Parish Calendar that was mailed to you. Please note the correct schedule is 6pm on the 31st, and 7, 8:30, 10:30, 12:30 and 2pm (Spanish). There will be no 5 or 7:01 on January 1st.
- ☞ **Religious Education** classes are on Christmas Break and will resume the week of January 5.
- ☞ Due to the holidays, the **Parish Offices will be closed** on December 24, 25, 26 and on January 1. The office will close at 4:30pm weekdays from December 23 through January 3.
- ☞ Sign up in the Church Vestibule for **All Night Adoration** immediately following the 8pm Mass on **First Friday, January 3**.

from our pastor



Dear Good People of Saint Mary,

This week has us seeing stars! I have to mention the beautiful constellation of art that has appeared over Bethlehem in the church. They are the loving work of a parishioner, Elise Lynch, who has been creating this beautiful galaxy for many months so that we might enjoy them at Christmas. It is such a great example of how the unique gifts of one can be so beneficial to everyone — to thousands of us.

Bethlehem is ready; the Magi and the camel are still far away, but on the way. The star begins to lead us to Jesus, calling us to prepare in our hearts a place for him to come dwell, an original homeless child seeking a safe place within us, a place of love and concord. In these last days of Advent, we need to empty ourselves a little more of ourselves, so that there can be space for him when he comes to us.

Part of why this is so complicated is that we just don't live in Bethlehem. Or Nazareth, for that matter. Around this time of year as duties and requests ramp up I usually try to figure out how I can simplify my life to more reflect the world into which Christ was born. I don't think the simplicity of Bethlehem was a product of not having much to do (I like having nothing to do least of all). Even in the quieter, less hectic context of Bethlehem people were still too busy to realize what was happening. If it weren't for the angels and the star, the whole birth Event might have been overlooked entirely.

Nor do I think the simplicity of Bethlehem was a matter of solitude. Some people have this ideal of living alone on an island without the cares and complications that are brought about by others. I'm reminded of my dear friend who looked out over a sea of tourists in Venice and said to me, "I'm just not ready for heaven." I asked what he meant. He replied, "I'm supposed to want to share heaven with all these people." Being alone is not the answer. In fact, I just spent nearly

two weeks in the hospital with rules I had set for myself to prevent too many visitors — no visitors — and recall those days as being so very empty of others. No, the simplicity of life necessarily involves the presence of other loving persons who experience the solitude with you.

Bethlehem wasn't the lavish accommodations or the gold faucets in the bathroom, or the great feasts — obviously. People who have everything they want will most often be the ones to tell you that *everything* doesn't supply you with what you really need.

So what was so great about Bethlehem? I think my answer might surprise some. When I was in the seminary coming to terms with what it meant to make a promise of obedience to a bishop, part of me wanted to rebel. Such a blind commitment seemed to violate concepts of personal freedom and self-reliance that I had come to value greatly in my own life at the time. Of course, such a promise is never binding if someone were to ask you to do something that you know is wrong; but what about the things of which you are not certain?

It requires a kind of trust, an admission that I am not in control, also a humility that says, at very least, that someone is capable of making a decision at least as good as me. And I am willing to give the assent of mind and heart to follow where I am led, believing the source of the leading is God and the place where I am being led is God. When you are following God in faith: hardship, suffering, disappointment, cold and hunger — all these things are bearable if you can see beyond them to a purpose and know that God's will is being accomplished through it, and through me and my life. And that new life will come from it.

This is exactly how I would describe Bethlehem. The cold, the cave. The faith of Mary and Joseph, the fertile moment in which God is born in us.

God bless you. *Fr. Don*

Christmas Hope

Students at Holy Cross Academy are working together to spread Christmas cheer. Under the direction of HCA graduate and NC State sophomore Christopher Caporali, classes are collecting money and items to help local families in need. Students donate a small amount of money which is then used to purchase items. The students wrap presents and gift cards, prepare food baskets and pray for the family before sending items off to be delivered to the recipients.

Mrs. McNamara's 5th graders created beautiful Christmas ornaments and colorful rubber band bracelets which have been on sale for over a week.

The students are working together to raise \$1,000 to aid in relief to the Philippines. The students advertised by making posters and hanging them around the school and making daily announcements reminding everyone to help with this mission of hope.

If you want to learn about our school and all that we can do for your child, please call us at 540-286-1600 or visit our website, www.holycrossweb.com. For St. Mary Preschool, please call 540-373-7553. Holy Cross Academy is a place where each child can flourish and grow. We would love to hear from you and will gladly give you a tour of our National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and tell you all about the wonderful things happening here.



*A National
Blue Ribbon
School, 2012*



Students participate in the preparation activities of Advent.

mass schedule

welcome
home for
christmas



st. mary
of the
IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION
Roman Catholic Church

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22 —

FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT

Regular Mass schedule for Saturday/Sunday
Saturday evening Vigil Masses • 5:00 & 7:00pm
Sunday Masses • 7:00, 8:30, 10:30am, 12:30pm, 2:00pm (*en español/in Spanish*), 5:00pm & 7:01pm at St. Mary Church
10:30am at Holy Cross Academy

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 —

CHRISTMAS EVE VIGIL MASSES

4:00pm at St. Mary Church
4:00pm at Holy Cross Academy
6:30pm at St. Mary Church
6:30pm at Holy Cross Academy
8:30pm at St. Mary Church
11:00pm, Festival of Carols before Midnight Mass

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25 —

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

Midnight Mass at St. Mary Church
7:00, 8:30, 10:30am and 12:30pm at St. Mary Church
2:00pm (*en español/in Spanish*) at St. Mary Church
*There is NO 10:30 Holy Cross Mass,
nor 5:00pm or 7:01pm Mass on Christmas Day.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 —

FEAST of the HOLY FAMILY

*Regular Saturday/Sunday Mass schedule of the parish
(see Dec. 22 above).*

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, DEC. 31 - JAN. 1 —

SOLEMNITY of MARY

The SOLEMNITY of MARY, MOTHER of GOD
is a Holy Day of Obligation.
Tuesday evening Vigil Mass 6:00pm at St. Mary Church
*Wednesday Masses 7:00, 8:30, 10:30am, and 12:30pm at St. Mary Church, 2:00pm (*en español/in Spanish*) at St. Mary Church*

SUNDAY, JAN. 5, 2014 —

SOLEMNITY of the EPIPHANY of the LORD

*Regular Saturday/Sunday Mass schedule of the parish
(see Dec. 22 above)*

St. Mary Prayer List

Please Pray for those who are sick or in need, especially: Helen Kozyra, Nancy Sturtevant, Joseph Bozicevic, Julie Fabula, Ree Messer, Martha Clements, Amelia McDevitt, Gerald Gardiner, Rico Santos, Rebecca Lowe, Erma Dean, Beverly Winful, Judy Larkin, Catherine Thompson, Lynn Jacobs, Katie Bailey, Holly Smith, Donald Estes, Frederick Brems, Jordan Rizer, Jeri Carone, Joseph Terreri, Dawn Walter, Anna Castagna, Tim Murray, Tom Gibbs, Douglas Moore, Bill Luck, Mary Ullmer, Georgene Burton, Joe O'Connor, David Silberman, Hieu Nguyen, Katie Billing, Audrey Wolski, Morgan Wolski, Ruth Weaver, Lucy Holzworth, David Arnold, Linda Moler, Matt Miller, Wilma Evans, Hoop Hooper, Rita Wainwright, Marianne Ford, Randy and Vicky Dehr, Velda Taylor, Deborah Ellia, Linda Kaila, Monica Lantigua, Bert DeVore, Betty Ann Dateno, Frank Moehler, Harold Gardiner, Garafano Family, Grant Family, Casey Family, LaCombe Family, Cecelia and Charles Lee, Cecelia Davis. Christopher Ford, Abraham Gomez Ramos, Joan Baker, Barbara Leone, Mary D'Amato, Sal Detrane, Tina Beaversdorf, Robert C. Murphy, Josephine Kreider, Eleanor Mitchell, Virginia Rose, Peter Fisher

Please Pray for all the men and women in our military and civilian support services overseas, especially: Javier Acosta, Leah April, Joel Asher, Miguel Ayala, Crystal Black, Ned Brownell, Jr., Derek Brostek, Christopher Burton, Matthew Campos, Leslie Capuano, Bruno Carriero, Jonathan Catalano, Frank Creamer, Sal Contreras, James Cook, Brad Cowan, Sam Del Grande, Glenn Dickinson, Aaron Doble, Anthony Dowden, John Dussault, Sandy Dussault, Travis Eades, Doug Ebanal, Christopher Eckert, Tim Evan, Christopher Ewers, Paul Fischer, Jonathan Fleming, Roberto Fuentes, Jason Geary, Ramon Guerra, Jr., Andrew Hamilton, Harry Hamilton, Ronnie Hamilton, Maria Harbeson, Andy Haskell, Raymond Haskell, Robert Haynes, Michael J. Herbek, James Helm, James Hoffnagle, Jr., Robert Horner, Danny L. Howard, Jr., Anthony Howell, Christine Kaila, Matthew Kearney, Daniel Kramer, Julio Laffitte III, Chris Lammers, Stephen Lammers, Scott LaRousse, Ryan Larsen, Jeffrey Lawrence, Kenneth Linstrom, Ryan Lynch, Sean Malloy, Josh Martin, Samantha Martin, Justin McClelland, Patrick McGroarty, Nathaniel McNamara, Roger Mitchell, Joseph Moore, Joseph Muldoon, Corey Nash, Mindy Niemann, James Kevin O'Donnell, Bryce Parson, Joshua K. Pastell, Sean Penczak, Dominick Joseph Petro, Scott Price, Nick Schulz, Duayne Scott, Tim Smetek, Andrew Smith, Douglas Stransky, Shawn Tupta, Heidi Urben, Christopher Williamson and Daniel Zeytoonian.

Please pray for all the faithful departed: especially all the benefactors of St. Mary Parish.

Pro Life Reflection

Christmas, for which we are now preparing, is not simply the feast of the birth of Christ; it is the feast of His becoming human, the reality called the Incarnation. Jesus was an embryo, a fetus. Life in the womb, which was already sacred because it comes from God, is now made even more holy and worthy of our every sacrifice. *Lord Jesus, You lived for nine months within the body of the Virgin Mary. Give success to the efforts of all who believe in Your Incarnation to protect every life in the womb.*

Readings for the week

23 Monday | Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Lk 1:57-66
24 Tuesday | 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Lk 1:67-79 | Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 | Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14
25 Wednesday | Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20 | Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
26 Thursday | Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22
27 Friday | 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a and 2-8
28 Saturday | 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Mt 2:13-18
29 Sunday | Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Ps 128; Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

First Friday, January 3

All night Eucharistic Adoration immediately following the 8pm Mass. "We fall down in adoration before the Son of God. As we adore Christ, born in a stable.... we feel the shepherds' same amazement and their same joy" (Pope John Paul II). Sign up sheets for All Night Adoration are in the vestibule of the Church, and our newborn King awaits you. Adore Him and honor His Blessed Mother - Come to Eucharistic Adoration!

Masses were offered in November for the following unscheduled intentions: John W. Prohaska, Cathy Czaja +, Irma Besong+, James Vawter+, Helgard Merkel+, Patricia Ann Miller+, Ann Cunningham+, Paul Akers+, George Watson, Donald Embrey+, Richard Salazar+, Michael Chase+, Ernesto Arquesola+, Winifred McGee+, Father Rooney, Cynthia Sams+, Frank Clancy, Jr.+, Donald Funai, Kevin O'Keefe+, Lucy Schuplin+, Ransford Paalhow Segu-Baffoe+, Frederick James McKenna II+, Sharon McKenna+, and Dorothy Lovrek+.

Daily Mass Intentions and Readings

December

23 MONDAY

6:30 Chris Christensen
 9am +Georgia Fulmer

24 TUESDAY

6:30 +Barbara Wallace
 9am +Joyce Schirmer
 4pm +Mark Allen Smolen
 4pm* +Patricia Gasper
 6:30pm +Lane Edwards
 6:30pm* +Daniel Gibbons
 8:30 +Delores Pastell

25 WEDNESDAY

12am For the Parish
 7am +Dominic Tam Nguyen
 8:30am Robert Joe Campbell
 10:30 +Robert Kaila
 12:30 +Elaine Wheeler
 2pm +Daniel Pannesi

26 THURSDAY

6:30 Paul & Perla Samsat
 9am +Dominick Delio

27 FRIDAY

6:30 +Barbara Wallace
 9am Nguyen Bao family

28 SATURDAY

9am Angelie Nguyen
 5pm Dr. & Mrs. Sambat
 7pm For the Parish

29 SUNDAY

7am +Gregory Carson
 8:30 +Barbara Wallace
 10:30 +Nell Bernard
 10:30* +Raoul Lherisson
 12:30pm +Frank & Lenor Schupp
 2pm Jean Bazile
 5pm Jasmine Nguyen
 7:01pm +William Corley

*indicates Mass at Holy Cross Academy

operations staff

www.stmaryfred.org

1009 Stafford Ave., Fredericksburg, VA 22401

SUNDAY MASS	Saturday Vigil 5 & 7pm Sunday 7, 8:30, 10:30am, 12:30, 2pm (Spanish), 5pm, 7:01pm 10:30am at Holy Cross Academy
DAILY MASS	Mon.-Fri.: 6:30 & 9am; Sat., 9am First Friday 8pm Holy Days of Obligation, as announced
DEVOTIONS	Adoration & Benediction, Wed., 7-9pm Novena with Exposition, Mon., 7-7:30pm All Night Adoration, First Friday Miraculous Medal Novena, Mon., after 9am Mass Divine Mercy, Wed., 3pm
CONFESSION	Wed., 7-9pm; Sat., 8am & 3:30pm, or by appt.
PARISH OFFICE	540-373-6491, fax 371-0251 stmary@stmaryfred.org Mon.-Fri., 8:30am - 4:30pm; students staff office weekdays until 9pm, Saturdays 9-5pm, Sundays 9:30-1:30pm Pastor, Fr. Don Rooney Fr. Keith Cummings Fr. Stephen Holmes Fr. Lino Rico Rostro Deacon Alberto Bernaola Deacon Dick Delio Executive Assistant, Rick Caporali Business Manager, Elaine Stanislawski Director of Sacred Music, David Mathers Administrative Assistant, Kelly Keiser Secretary, Mary Fitch
HOLY CROSS ACADEMY	540-286-1600 250 Stafford Lakes Parkway Fredericksburg, Virginia 22406-7234 Principal, Sr. Susan Louise Eder, O.S.F.S.
ST. MARY PRESCHOOL	373-7553 Director, Nanci Scharf
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE	373-6491 Director, Aristides Lucas Associate Director, Karen Sturtevant
YOUTH MINISTRY	373-6491 Director, Leo Chavarria
BAPTISMS	Parish registration (90 days) and class required. Please contact the parish office to schedule the date at least four weeks in advance.
MARRIAGE	Parish registration required; contact parish six months in advance to begin preparation.
JOIN US	New Family Registration meetings are held monthly in the church on fourth Sundays, following the 10:30 Mass. Please notify us of any telephone/address changes.

Weekly Offertory

Offertory Collection for 12/15/13	35, 116.
Parish Christmas Collection for Charities	12,579.
Annual Catholic Charities Collection (addl)	1,918.
Poor Box for St Vincent de Paul (week ending 12/15/13)	189.
SCRIP Profit week ending 12/08/13	416.
YTD profit	3,153.

Thank you for your continued generosity! Please remember to use your Offertory Envelopes to ensure the accuracy of your end of year statement. The "Children's Envelope" proceeds will not be recorded on family statements.

Due early bulletin deadlines, the next financial report will be published in the January 12, 2014 bulletin.

Children's Offering for December

The "We Care Project" was initiated to awaken in students an awareness of the needs of others, right in their own diocese, and to encourage students to implement the Gospel Message by making their own personal sacrifices to raise money for Catholic Charities' Programs which serve the poor in our Diocese. All donations made by the children will be sent to Catholic Charities by our parish on behalf of the children.

New Year with SCRIP

Is setting and sticking to a budget one of your resolutions for 2014? SCRIP can help with that!

Let's say you budget \$500 for groceries....buy \$500 of Giant SCRIP for the month. Give your kids a clothing allowance through SCRIP...purchase Old Navy, Kohl's, or Aeropostale.

Do you want to dine out once a month? There are dozens of restaurants that participate in SCRIP.... Applebees, Bob Evans, Bonefish Grill, Mimi's Cafe, Outback, Olive Garden, Steak n Shake, Red Lobster and many others!!

To set up an account online at www.shopwithscrip.com and use our school code, 7B876EBB188L2, so Holy Cross Academy gets credit for your purchase. If you have any questions about SCRIP please email Torie Baldwin at scripcoordinator@holycrossweb.com or 571-330-3448. Thanks for using SCRIP!

Second Collection January 11 & 12

The Second Collection on January 12, 2014 will be for the Parish Building Fund.

Giant A+ Bonus Bucks

Please consider designating our parish school, Holy Cross Academy, when you use your Giant Food A+ Bonus card. It has to be done annually. Giant Bonus Bucks School Id: 02320

Parish Office Holiday Schedule

Parish Offices will be closed on December 24, 25, and 26 for Christmas; and on January 1 for New Year's Day.

The office will be open December 23, 27, 30 & 31, and January 2 & 3 from 8:30am-4:30pm.

Religious Education classes will resume the week of January 5.

Articles must be submitted two weeks prior to publication. Send articles to stmary@stmaryfred.org. Thanks!

Religious Education Family Week

When we return from Christmas Break, we will once again celebrate "Family Week." This program was very successful last year. Parents are expected to attend class with their children. All family members will be in the same classroom for the Family Activity period. It will certainly be a meaningful experience.

Assistance to Philippines Typhoon Victims

Special Thanks to all who contributed to the victims of the recent typhoon in the Philippines. Your generosity was quick and generous. It was especially heartwarming to see the involvement of the children.

youth

Middle School Youth Group

Attention 7th and 8th Graders! Start the NEW YEAR off with a bunch of fun on Sunday, January 5 from 3:30pm to 4:30pm in the Parish Life Center. All 7th and 8th graders are invited to come and get together for some games, inspiring talk on the faith and get to have fellowship with their peers.

Diocesan Life is Very Good Rally. We will have Mass with Bishop Loverde, hear musical performances by Josh Blakesley Band and inspirational speaker Mary Bielski and Fr. Agustino Torres, CFR. Then we will head to the March for Life in Washington DC in prayerful protest and march to the Supreme Court for an end to Roe vs. Wade. Permission slips available on website. Spaces are limited and they fill up fast!



Life is VERY Good

Wednesday, January 22, St. Mary Youth Ministry is heading to the Patriot Center and Washington DC for a morning of prayer and praise at the



Catholic Youth Ministry
Ugly Christmas Sweater Party

God's Surname

2013-12-17

L'Osservatore Romano

At Holy Mass on Tuesday, 17 December, Pope Francis commented on the readings from the day, taken from the Book of Genesis (49:2,8-10) and from the Gospel of St Matthew (1:1-17). On this, the Pontiff's seventy seventh birthday, he presided at his customary morning Mass in the Chapel of Santa Marta. Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, was present to concelebrate the Mass and expressed his best wishes to the Pope on behalf of the entire College.

The Pope centred his homily around the theme of God's presence in the history of mankind. Within this context, the Pontiff identified two key themes - inheritance and genealogy. He said they are keys to interpreting the first Reading from Genesis regarding the prophecy of Jacob, who gathers together his sons and foretells a glorious line of descendants for Judah, and the Gospel passage which recounts the genealogy of Jesus. Reflecting especially on the latter, Pope Francis said that "we are not dealing with a list in a telephone book" but with "pure history," for "God sent his Son among men. Jesus is consubstantial with God, the Father, but also consubstantial with his mother, a woman. And this is his consubstantiality with his mother: God entered history, God wanted to become history. He is with us. He has journeyed with us."

It was a journey that began long ago, in Paradise, immediately after the original sin. God "had this idea: to make the journey

with us." Therefore, "he called Abraham, the first person indicated on this list, and he invited him to walk. Abraham began the journey: he begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah." And so it went, over the course of history. "God journeys with his people," the Pope said, because he did not want to come and save us apart from history; he wanted to make history with us."

It is a history wrought of holiness and sin, the Pope said. The list of the genealogy of Jesus is filled with saints and sinners: from Abraham and David who converted after his sin to "high caliber sinners, who sinned gravely." But God made history with them all. The latter were sinners who did not know how to respond to the design God had in mind for them. "Soloman, so great and intelligent, ended like a poor man who didn't even know his name." And yet God was also with him. "And this is beautiful: God makes history with us."

The Pope continued: "when God wants to say who he is, he says: I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob." "What is God's surname?" the Pope asked. "We are, each one of us. He takes the name of each of us and makes it his surname: "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Pedro, of Marietta, of Armony, of Marisa, of Simon, of everyone. He takes his surname from us. God's surname is each one of us."

The Pope then said, "as Christmas approaches, it is natural to think: if he made history with us, if he took his surname from us, if he has left it to us to write his history, then we for our part should allow God to write our history."

Pope Francis concluded by extending to all those present an invitation to an open heart, and a Christmas wish: "May the Lord write your history, and my you allow him to write it."



Over 40 Singles Fun & Fellowship - Dec 22

Join the group Sunday, December 22 after the 8:30am Mass at Panera in Central Park. This is a great way to get to know people in the group and offer your suggestions for future activities.

They have many fun events planned throughout the spring. Contact Kathy at ksaladino2009@comcast.net to get on the distribution list.

Christmas Tree Sales Ends at Noon - Dec. 22

The Knights of Columbus would like to thank all of you who took the time to come out and buy a tree or wreath and support our fundraising efforts this year. We are truly blessed with your generosity.

Young Adult Group

Young Adult Women will meet in the John Paul II house, Monday, December 30 at 8pm.

St. Anne's Sisters in Faith (Mom's Group)

The group will take a two week Christmas break. We will not meet December 27 or January 3. We will resume our meetings starting on January 10, 2014. We wish all of you a most blessed and holy Christmas season. Please contact rocio.o.atkinson@gmail.com for more information.

Optio Secundus Men's Group - Jan. 2

The "Second Option" of the St. Mary's Men's Group meets the first Thursday of each month.

The next meeting is January 2 at the Blue & Grey Brewery. Happy hour at 6:30pm followed by open discussion and optional dinner from 7:30 to 9:30 pm.

The "Optio" group is an alternative version to the original St. Mary Men's group which meets on the last Thursday of the month. The traditional 4th Thursday version of the men's group reads and discusses Church writings and doctrine and their impact on the daily lives of Catholic men.

The "Optio" group gathers for happy hour in the brew pub then usually a topic presented by one of our Parish Priests or Deacons followed by open group discussion. Topics generally focus on issues facing Catholic men and fathers in an ever increasing secular world.

Come join like minded Catholic men of the Parish for camaraderie, fellowship, great food and beer in a relaxed environment. Any questions - contact Mike Storck at 571-289-7878.

Baptism Class - Jan. 2

All parents are required to attend a Baptism Preparation Class before their child receives the sacrament. The class is held in English the first Thursday of each month. The class lasts about an hour to an hour and a half. Both parents are encouraged to attend, attendance by children is discouraged so as not to disrupt the class. The next class is Thursday, January 2 at 7pm and is held in Room 204 of the Parish Life Center. Pre-registration is required, call 540-373-6491

Classes for Spanish speakers are held the first Saturday of each month at 2:30pm in the same location.

The Art of Marriage February 14 & 15

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church would like to personally invite you to attend the upcoming Art of Marriage Conference. As a parish, we care about the strength of your marriage. Please join other couples for a six part video conference designed to make a good marriage better and offer guidance for those experiencing challenges.

The Art of Marriage is being held on Valentine's Day weekend, February 14 and 15. The cost is \$35.00 and includes a set of workbooks that corresponds with the material presented. Please watch the church bulletin for more information about registering on-line or contact Caroline at 540-371-3781 or sweetcaroline003@gmail.com to register directly through the parish. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you there!

Al Anon Surviving the Weekend Group

Al Anon is for those who have been affected by someone else's drinking, and members come together to learn a better way of life and how to find happiness. It's important to know that you are not alone and there is help. There is an Al Anon meeting every Saturday at 10am in Room 204 of the St. Mary Parish Life Center.

Religious Vocations

"When Joseph awoke he did as the angel of the Lord directed him."
Are you prayerfully vigilant about discovering your vocation in Christ? Might He be inviting you to the priesthood or consecrated life? Call Father J.D. Jaffe at 703-841-2514 or email jjaffe@arlingtondiocese.org.

"as I have done for you

Circle of Love Ministry

The CCW would like to share an opportunity to live Christ's words by loving our neighbors. Our Circle of Love committee wants you to be part of our mission by joining us in visiting the sick and home bound, providing needed rides to church or doctors, sharing meals with families in crises, babysitting, and fulfilling a variety of other needs. If you have a few hours to share and would be willing to join us, please send your name and e-mail or telephone number to emgccw@gmail.com and you

will be contacted. We look forward to having you on our team.

If any parishioners are in need of assistance, please contact the CCW Circle of Love Ministry at emgccw@gmail.com or call the Parish Office.

Donate Your Used Car to Catholic Charities!

If you own a car you are thinking of replacing, we need your donation. The Catholic Charities Car Ministry takes used vehicles and gives them directly to needy families (so the car needs

to be in good running order). In return, Catholic Charities can help you get a tax deduction. We have a long list of families who need transportation. Please contact Bill Hall at 703-841 3898 or whall@ccda.net.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The SVDP Thrift Shop is located in Greenwich Plaza off Lafayette Blvd and open Monday-Saturday, 10am-4pm, 540-898-9066. The shop is supported by your donations of furniture, clothing and household goods. Monetary donations may be placed in the Poor Boxes near the church doors. The proceeds from the Thrift Shop and your donations are used to help families in need in our community.



Thank you for your generous support!



Your charity fosters hope

- ♥ A single mom will be able to feed her family.
- ♥ A homeless family will enter a warm home.
- ♥ A young pregnant mother will receive pro-life care and counseling.
- ♥ A father will move from a life of homelessness toward independent living.

Thank you for your support!

Your generous support during our Annual Christmas Collection allows us to continue helping our neighbors.

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Arlington | 200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 506, Arlington, VA 22203 | 703-841-3830 | www.ccda.net

Register Now for Catholic Advocacy Day

Join Virginia Bishops and Paul S. Loverde and Francis X. DiLorenzo and the Virginia Catholic Conference at the annual Catholic Advocacy Day on January 30, 2014, from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Richmond. Catholic Advocacy Day is an opportunity for Catholics to join and meet with lawmakers supporting public policies that protect life, the poor and vulnerable, and promote justice. Bus transportation from Arlington and Fredericksburg is available. For more information and to register, please visit www.vacatholic.org.

so you must also do"

Unlocking Doors MICAHA Ministry

In the lonely hours of a winter night, she sat in a shopping center parking lot. She searched for Christian music on the car radio and prayed.

"Why did this happen to me, Lord. I didn't do anything wrong."

In the 1980s, she and her husband had bought a brand new home in Mill Garden South. They raised four children in that home. But by the time the last one moved out on their own, her long-standing marriage was packing up, as well. She moved to West Virginia to be near her brother and his wife, but she missed her children. Her son convinced her to move back to Fredericksburg with his family, until she could find a job to supplement her retirement check and afford a place of her own.

Finding a job as a sixty-something in a down economy proved more than challenging. And after only four months, she decided she had outworn her welcome.

She went to stay with one of her daughters, who lived in a mobile home park in town. But after only a few weeks, the two were at odds over a restriction in the lease that prohibited visitors from staying more than 14 days.

"I didn't understand the 'you can't stay here because I have a landlord.'" she said. "It hurt. I wondered what kind of kids had I raised, and I blanked out everything else."

She ended the argument by secretly leaving one night in a the middle of a snowstorm.

"I headed down the road a ways and thought to myself, 'where am I going to go now?'"

She checked into a motel that night, and that was the beginning of a long two and a half years of displacement and eventual homelessness.

Her savings lasted a little while. She switched motels every few days to make sure she always got the best rate. People suggested she try food pantries, but she was so used to having money that she couldn't imagine they would actually give her anything. A time or two she visited the area's homeless shelter, in hopes of saving money, but decided against it—too many other people needing the beds more than she did.

Instead, she took to her vehicle, initially driving as far as the Manassas Visitor's Center to ensure she was safe at night. Eventually, she learned to stay locally in the Wal-mart parking lot. If she moved her vehicle frequently enough, no one would detect that she was actually living there.

Her car was cramped. She didn't sleep much, and sometimes she went as long as six days without a shower. She spent a lot of time thinking and praying about getting through the next hour.

"It seems like a bad dream in some ways," she said. "It does something to you when you are sitting in your car for hours watching the traffic go by."

She found herself suddenly thankful for things she had barely taken note of in previous years. She had a blanket, a pillow and a car to keep her out of the weather.

"Some people don't even have this much," she thought, "And somehow that gave me the feeling that everything would be okay."

She found her way to Micah's respite program after a brief hospital stay, and the wrap around services available there set her on a track to participate in a job training program for the elderly. She was accepted into a subsidized apartment complex for older adults and is now going on a year and half of stable housing.

She lost a lot in her years on the street. Belongings were stolen from her. Other items were sold to earn money for another week in a motel. But when it came time to move into her apartment, material things were the least of her concern.

"I don't feel an attachment to things anymore," she says. "In fact, I feel better having less."

Sure, her house has the basics—a bed, a sofa and a kitchen table. But more important to her today are the relationships that have been rekindled there.

Her house is now a place that her son brings her granddaughter to visit twice a week. It is the location for one-on-one time with her youngest child, who she feels lost years of attention in the shadows of his siblings. It is the safe haven where she can return after Thanksgiving dinner with her family and know that, even in her darkest hours on the street, she was never left with nothing at all.

To volunteer, call Lori Yelverton at 540/479-4116 x11 or e-mail lori@dolovewalk.net