

The-Xavier-Connection

Publication of St. Francis Xavier Church Vol. 13, No 3 December, 2018



SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
A PARISH OF GOSPEL GENEROSITY

St. Francis Xavier Church

219 2nd Street North
PO Box 150
Sartell, MN 56377

Phone: 320.252.1363

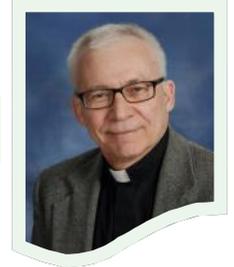
Fax: 320.259.7090

Website: www.stfrancissartell.org

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Notes From the Pastor



From the Pastor:

Time is running out. Get ready. Get everything prepared. There are only so many days left until.....

And no, I am not talking about how many shopping days are left until Christmas. I am talking about our Sunday Scripture messages for Advent. These first Sundays of Advent invite us to remember the second coming of Jesus, and in light of his coming, to prepare our lives in such a way that we welcome Jesus now. Preparing in such a way, we will be ready. We may not know the day, but we can experience Christ's presence now. So these first weeks of our Advent journey invite us to look to the meaning behind Christ's first coming.

Fittingly enough, when we prepare for Christ's second coming, we will also be ready to remember His birth and celebrate it with great joy and love.

So, how do we prepare? In the midst of all our Christmas preparations, we consciously choose to look at how our lives are currently reflecting the presence of Christ. And where they are not, we continue to work at changing those things. In that regard, the Sacrament of Reconciliation can be a great help. In the setting of prayer and God's love for us, we can admit our sins and experience Christ's healing gifts.

In the midst of all our Christmas preparations, we keep ever before us the unselfish love that is at the heart of Christ. What better way to respond to such love than to reach out to our sisters and brothers who are in need. Some might be in need of a friendly word, a kind gesture. Some might appreciate a little bit of our time to visit or help them. Some might need assistance in helping to turn their lives around. Others might need food. Sharing with others, especially those who have less than we do, is a powerful preparation to experience the presence of Christ.

Amazingly, when we truly give of ourselves in love, we find that our lives are renewed and filled with great joy.

By preparing in such a way to experience Christ's love, we will truly be able to celebrate His birth with renewed joy, hope and love.

Join us for our Penance Service on December 9 at 6:30 pm. Plan now to celebrate Christmas Eve and Day with other parishioners as we celebrate the Eucharist at 4 pm and 8 pm on Christmas Eve and 9 am on Christmas Day.

Immaculate Conception Mass

Saturday, December 8 9:00 a.m.

Penance Service

Sunday, December 9 6:30 p.m.

Individual Confessions

Wednesday, December 19 4:00 p.m.

Friday, December 21 1:00 p.m. 4:00 pm. 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Masses

Monday, December 24

4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Mass

Tuesday, December 25 9:00 a.m.

New Year's Eve Mass

Monday, December 31 5:00 p.m.

New Year's Day Mass

Tuesday, January 1, 2019 9:00 a.m.



Knights of Columbus News

Our local KC Council—5276 Bishop Trobec Council has been active with many things recently (youth ministry, Church of the Week, St. Nicholas and more) and there are a handful of upcoming events in which we invite your support and/or participation.

- **Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship Saturday, January 12th at 3:00 pm.** This is open to **ALL** 9 to 14 year old girls and boys from our community. This event takes place in the **St. Francis Xavier School gym**. Competitors will shoot 15 free throws with the contestant who makes the most advancing to district competition in February. Contact Jake Schneider for more information—320-761-7143.
- **Rose for Life Weekend—January 19th and 20th.** Knights of Columbus members will be at the doors handing out “rose stickers” . Donations are accepted with all proceeds going to Pro-life causes including Birthline (and other crisis pregnancy centers), Pro-Life Across America (the billboard people) and Choose Life to name a few.
- **Knights of Columbus Super Bowl Sunday Breakfast—Sunday, February 3rd—**Breakfast will be served in the school gym from 8:30 am to Noon (or so) - watch parish bulletins for more details. Our council also kicks off our annual Youth Gun Raffle that weekend. \$20 tickets are sold for a chance to win 1 of 6 guns. If the winner does not want a gun, the value of the gun can be taken as a gift card to be used for anything in the Scheel’s store.

Support from St. Francis Xavier, St. Stephen, and St. Columbkille Parishes allow our council to give funds to many needs in our local communities, youth ministry programs, schools, missions, pro-life, priest vocations, and more. The Knights of Columbus is a fraternal organization open to confirmed Catholic men age 18 and up. Our principals are charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism. Contact one of us for more details.

Grand Knight Dan Kurowski 320-241-7715 Secretary Tom Offerdahl 320-290-3228

Chancellor Jake Schneider 320-761-7143

Put your money where your heart is!

“Every economic...action must set about providing each inhabitant of the planet with the minimum wherewithal to live in dignity and freedom, with the possibility of supporting a family, educating children, praising God and developing one’s own human potential.” -Pope Francis

*“It is good for people to realize that purchasing is always a moral - and not simply economic - act.”
Pope Benedict XVI*

Our faith calls us to live out our Gospel values on a daily basis. Catholic Social Teaching principles of respecting the dignity of work and caring for the poor are key ways in which we can do this. Through fair trade and ethical purchasing, we can use our economic power to contribute to the common good and live out these values. Jesus himself helps us to understand that the financial decisions we make reflect our values: “Remember, where your treasure is, there your heart is also” (Mark 6: 21).

There are many ethical sources for gifts and your personal purchases. Locally produced items, homemade foods, fair trade coffee and chocolate are just a few. It is easy to search online for fair trade and ethical shopping, B companies and LC3 companies. Take time to read about their purpose and mission. Some focus on the environment, some on wages and many employ women coming out of trafficking situations.

Also consider gifts of the donation variety. *Heiffer Int’l*, *CRS Gift Catalog*, *Oxfam America*, *World Vision* and *ELCA Good Gifts* are organizations that offer wonderful gifts that you can give to someone or in the memory of someone.

By Shelby Vaske

Ethical shopping sites:

SERRV	Elegantees
Mata Traders	Krochet Kids
Prosperity Candle	Causewear
Maggie’s Organics	Purpose Jewelry
Fair Indigo	Pact Organic
Root Collective	Shea Yeleen
Sharing the Dream in Guatemala	
Gifts with Humanity	Equal Exchange
Purse & Clutch	Ten Thousand Villages

A Gift for the Family *By Deb Rudolph*



Here we are, smack in the middle of it, the chaos of the preparation for Christmas: shopping, crafting, baking, travel plans, icy roads, more snow, holiday school programs, concerts and all of these in addition to an already packed schedule. So how is one supposed to find time for the real reason for all this added chaos: The Birth of Jesus Christ? It will take a bit of sacrifice, but it will be worth the effort! Consider this:

The greatest gift of this season is the gift of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel; God with us. A gift given by God the Father that changed the course of humanity forever. How long has it been since you have taken time to reflect on the gift of Jesus? Do your children and grandchildren know the story? Do you have a nativity set in your home? Have you taught your children to pray to Jesus?

I invite us all to find an hour or two for your family to gather, turn off the TV and all other devices. Turn the lights down low and read or tell the story of the Birth of our Savior directly from the Bible (Luke 2.1-20). Then ask all to share their thoughts and/or memories about Christmas; What do they most enjoy? What makes them happy? If they could give a gift to anyone without cost, what would they give and to whom? What is their favorite memory of Christmas? Which of the gifts they have received do they most remember? Listen attentively as each person speaks. Note the faces and the eyes of your loved ones as they speak from their heart — it is there you will find your true *GIFT!*



Light The Flame

I remember growing up in Catholic school and having to make construction paper Advent wreaths every single year! The little yellow flames would be cut out and held until each new candle was lit. Great idea, except for the fact that the chance you could find the flames greatly diminished as each week passed. I will bet over 50% of the wreaths never received a 4th flame! Of course by then, most kids in elementary school had moved on to Christmas. Christmas was not a day. It was an entire experience of vacation from school.

You may or may not have an Advent wreath in your home or office, but those flames are rather insignificant to the flame that should be burning in our hearts during this season. How are you finding ways to light your fire? How are you preparing the way for Christ to come into your life and the lives of those around you in a more profound way?

The ritual of an Advent wreath is a good idea for anyone. But don't think that your preparations are done simply because you have one. You are called to be a flame to others during this season, reminding them of why we celebrate this time at all. Each person is a candle to be lit, and you have the gifts, given to you by God, to light them. At Christmas, you want God to look at you and see all the light generated by those He lit through you. Now is the time. Don't wait until Advent is almost over. You might not be able to find your own flames if you wait too long.

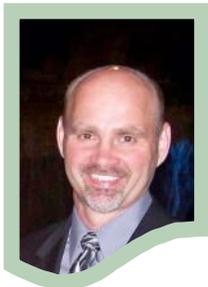
-- Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS



GATHERING IN THE ARTS

By Ruth Brattensborg

St. Nicholas (Steve Buley) visited SFX Church at all the Masses on December 1 & 2. A cookie and juice reception followed the 10:30 Mass, and St. Nicholas was available for family pictures.



Humbled, Inspired, Hopeful

By Phil Corbett

I can get a little stuck on myself. Sometimes, I just go through the motions of living. Periodically, I have found myself a little less hopeful for our society. Fortunately, I often have experiences that humble me, inspire me, or rekindle my hopefulness. I had never had one experience that did all three at the same time – until recently.

One night in November, I saw my friend John. John and I grew up together. We both moved away from home. John moved back a decade or so ago. I only talked to John for a short time that night, just like everyone else who waited for hours to talk to him. At the end of the night, John may not have remembered the specifics of many of the conversations but the underlying messages were “I’m sorry” and “If there is anything I can do...” and “Kim was a wonderful person.” The event, as you may have guessed, was a wake - a wake for John’s wife, Kim, who died after a year-or-so long battle with cancer. I was struck by the sheer number of people from so many walks of life who showed up to support their phy-ed teacher, coach, teammate, relative, and friend, including one classmate who drove 10 ½ hours from Indiana, after a long day of work, to show his support. I had always known John as a positive person who reminded me and inspired me to focus at the best aspects of life and encouraged others to be the best they could be, I just didn’t realize how many others felt the same way.

Though stories about people who are positive and who do not put themselves above anyone else may not always get the biggest headlines or the most shares or views, I do think people genuinely appreciate them more. I know I do. I do not feel the need to live like John, though. That is something I cannot do. I am not him. Knowing John just makes me want to become a much better version of myself – one who is more humble, more inspired, more hopeful.

Social Justice Concerns

by Molly Weyrens



Happy Advent! We live in a world that doesn't honor or recognize Advent because it takes too long! Who really waits for anything anymore? It's a wonder they haven't tried shortening the time for pregnancy to 3 months instead of 9! But what wisdom our church had in the early 4th century to set aside this time to prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ. It seems that Christmas is knocking on our heels all of Advent to skip ahead to the manger – at the risk of missing so much in-between. The Social Justice Concerns Committee invites you to focus on something different this season. Jeff Phillipich had a great idea to offer this "Alternative Advent Calendar" based on the themes of Catholic Social Teaching. May it help us all remember and be in solidarity with those in our world who struggle for freedom, food, housing, safety and friends. Remember, our committee meets the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 in Xavier Hall. Join us!

Week 1 Dec 2 - Life and Dignity of the Human Person/Rights of Workers

Sunday – Take a tag from our Giving Tree to support a family needing gifts for Christmas.

Monday – At a meal or gathering share why you feel human life is sacred. Who or what do you treat as sacred?

Tuesday – At a meal or gathering read Romans 12: 9-12 and share/reflect on what that reading says to you. Which idea is the hardest to follow? Why?

Thursday – Say a prayer for all the workers in your life.

Friday – Take 5 minutes out of your day to reflect on the blessings in your life. What has blessed you this week? Give thanks.

Week 2 Dec 9 - Call to Family, Community, and Participation & Rights and Responsibilities

Sunday – Re-read the Gospel for today and share how you prepare a way for the Lord?

Monday – What is one thing you like about your family? Share a prayer of Thanksgiving together.

Tuesday – Take a look at the US Bishop's Prayer Service for Racial Healing in Our Land. Go to www.usccb.org and search for "Racial Healing."

Thursday – Say a prayer for all in our parish community, our neighborhood, and our city.

Friday – Take 5 minutes out of your day to reflect on the blessings in your life. What has blessed you this week? Give thanks.

Week 3 Dec 16 - Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Sunday – Say a special prayer for the families on our Giving Tree. It's also *Gaudete Sunday* – What makes you joyful?

Monday – Look into serving a community meal at Place of Hope or Anna Marie's Alliance in St Cloud with a group of friends or your family – or with St. Francis Xavier!

Tuesday – Take some time to look into volunteering with Catholic Charities in St Cloud...as an individual or group - www.ccstcloud.org/volunteer

Thursday – Say a prayer for all those who are live in poverty and experience homelessness in our community. What will you do to help them?

Friday – Take 5 minutes out of your day to reflect on the blessings in your life. Share a random act of kindness and then reflect on it with your family.

Week 4 Dec 23 – Solidarity/Care for God's Creation

Sunday – Everything is connected. We share the planet with many creatures – humans too! Share a time when you loved being in nature. Where was it? Describe it. Why did it mean so much?

Monday – Save on resources and make a gift for a family member out of materials you have at home.

Tuesday/Wednesday – Christmas Eve/Day! Give thanks and praise by completing a purposeful random act of kindness. Peak outside, breathe in clean air and give thanks for the gift of Christmas!





Sacraments: Gifts of Grace

How may we serve you?

Perhaps you and your spouse are Catholic but did not get married in the Catholic Church and would now like to have your marriage blessed.

Perhaps you are an adult Catholic who has not received First Eucharist, Reconciliation or Confirmation.

Has God placed on your heart a need to discern consecrated life, the priesthood or the diaconate?

Individual or small group instruction is available to prepare you to know and to receive these gifts of our faith. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact:

Deb Rudolph, Pastoral Associate

252-1363, Ext. 1103



The Gift of Catholic Education

Education is the most valuable and treasured gift you can give your children. An education that focuses on the spiritual, academic, social, emotional and physical qualities of your child is teaching to the whole child. A school that encourages and models the teachings of Jesus throughout the school day is one that is supporting and developing children who care about others, themselves and the world around them. It is teaching them values for a life time. St. Francis Xavier School is just that school!

St. Francis Xavier School offers parents and their children the educational choice for a successful future. A future that starts with a strong foundation...one that is centered on faith and values with outstanding academics, community service and much more woven throughout all learning experiences. Supporting each and every student is a dedicated group of master teachers who care deeply and are committed to the success of each child.

Our programs are dynamic, inclusive, diverse and academically challenging. The main thing that distinguishes schools like ours from other learning institutions is the fact that we instill Catholic truths and values during the daily academic life of each student.

We would like to invite you to experience the possibilities of St. Francis Xavier School. We extend a warm and welcome invitation for a personal tour of our school that gives you a glimpse into our classrooms, attend one of our upcoming open house events on Sunday, January 27th or Thursday, February 7th, or visit our website at <http://www.stfrancissartellschool.org>.

St. Francis Xavier School is a gem that focuses on faith, knowledge, service and discovery.

Peace in Christ!

Kathy Kockler, Principal

Save the Date!

Parish Mission: April 7-9, 2019

What do ducks, drug houses, saints, camps for children with cancer, street gangs, pancakes, fine wine and rescued dogs have in common?

Father Dominic J. Roscioli!

St. Francis Xavier Parish will host a 3-day parish mission led by Fr. Dominic Roscioli from April 7-9th, 2019. In Fr. Dom's words, "Along my life journey, I have discovered why flamingos are pink, what guns and ice cream have in common, what God whispers to each of us in our mother's womb, and why you should never trust a kid in a wheelchair! I'd like to share my stories and relate them to your story in God's Grand Design."

Fr. Dominic Roscioli:

- Grew up in an Italian neighborhood
- A Parish, Hospital and Hospice Priest
- Stage 3 Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma Survivor
- Founder of Fr. Dom's Duck Doo Compost
- Founder of Holy Spir-its, LLC (a wine company)
- 25 Year Volunteer at Paul Newman's "Hole in the Wall Gang Camp" for children with cancer and other life-threatening diseases
- Supporter of The Next Step, a non-profit that helps young people, ages 16 and older, suffering from life-threatening illness
- Storyteller!!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Knifty Knitters Intergenerational Scarf Making Event

Students and adults of all ages are invited to join us for a scarf making event on

**Sunday, January 13th at 1:30pm
in the Gathering Area.**

(you do not need to know how to knit in order to join us!)

**Watch the bulletin and Flocknote for more
information**





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DATES TO REMEMBER

December 2018

- 1** Advent Anointing Service
- 1-2** Saint Nick Visits
- 4** Baptism Prep Class
- 6** First Thursday Coffee
- 9** Advent Penance Service
- 17** KC Meeting
- 24** Christmas Eve
- 25** Christmas Day

January 2019

- 5-6** Three Kings at Masses
- 8** Realities of Aging Part III
- 12** KC's Free Throw Contest
- 15** Health & Wellness Mtg.
- 16** Aftershock
- 19-20** Rose for Life Weekend
- 24** Pastoral Council Meeting

February 2019

- 3** KC's SuperBowl Breakfast
- 5** Realities of Aging Part IV
- 14** Valentines Day
- 24** SFX Rocks
- 28** Pastoral Council Mtg.

March 2019

- 10** Daylight Savings Time Starts
- 15** Fish Fry
- 20** Aftershock
- 21** Blood Drive