

December 31, 2023

From Father Kirby...

Merry Christmas, Team Grace! Yes, we are still within the Christmas season, which doesn't conclude until the Epiphany next Sunday. Be sure to keep your Christmas tree and decorations up until Epiphany! And let's be sure to keep greeting fellow Christians with the heartfelt greeting, "Merry Christmas!"

This weekend, we have sign-ups for our next Nocturnal Adoration this coming Friday and Saturday, January 5-6. Please be generous with your time and join your parish family in our all-night prayer vigil. *What a great way to start the New Year!*

The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1, falls on Monday this year and the Church has suspended it as a Holy Day of Obligation. There is no obligation for Mass on January 1. The parish campus will be closed. There is no public Mass. All events are suspended.

Some things happening at the parish that I'd like to highlight this week:

The work continues on our Holy Angels Columbarium and our Front Hill! It's great to see the progress! The anticipated conclusion of the work is sometime in March.

This Wednesday, January 3, our Wednesday formation nights pick back up. All the sessions begin at 6:30 PM. Confessions will be heard beforehand at 6:00 PM. Our Parish Office will be opened before and after the sessions in case anyone is in need of administrative assistance.

Next Sunday, January 7 at 12:15 PM, in honor of the Epiphany, the parish is hosting an Epiphany Stocking Fellowship. At the fellowship, each person will receive a small stocking and be invited to walk through various candy stations and fill their stocking with holy day goodies! All are welcome!

Please note our [calendar for the program year](#) 2023/2024 is posted on our parish website. The calendar describes all our events and programs for the year.

Some other future events I'd like to highlight:

On Wednesday, January 10, Father Robert Morey, a retired priest of our diocese, will be hearing our daily Confessions and celebrating our Noon Mass. *Welcome back, Father Morey!*

While Father Morey is here, I'll be away visiting our friends at the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) and giving an interview for the show, [The Journey Home](#). The show is mainly about the conversion stories of people who have entered the fullness of the Christian faith and have become Catholic Christians. While I'm not a convert, the show is interested in my own journey of faith, which is reflected in the article, [Called, Converted, and Chosen in Christ](#).

On the weekend of January 13-14, the parish is hosting a Diaper Drive. All parishioners are asked to bring children's diapers to Mass with them. Parishioners can drop off the diapers before Mass at the pavilion. Members of our Helping Hands ministry will be on site to assist you.

On Sunday, January 14, we'll host two blood buses on our campus. There is a dire need for blood in our area and so I encourage all parishioners to consider giving blood. [Here's the link to sign up](#).

The annual Priest Convocation will be held on Monday – Thursday, January 15-18. All priests of the diocese will be with the Bishop. As such, there are no Confessions or public Masses at the parish on these days. The Rosary, our Adoration times, and our daily devotions will all be offered. Come and join your parish for public prayer!

Some general announcements for the good of the parish:

I'd like to encourage every household of the parish to register for [FORMED](#). This is a free digital platform with good Catholic, family-friendly content. I also want to strongly encourage every household to join [EWTN OnDemand](#), which is another free digital platform whose content is supportive of our faith.

As a reminder, our parish staff can be readily reached via email. [Here is the staff directory](#).

I was hoping to host a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Rome this coming June. With the situation in the Middle East, such a pilgrimage is not possible. In its place, however, I'll be hosting a pilgrimage to the [Great Shrines of France](#). The tour will include Lourdes, Lisieux (Saint Therese the Little Flower), the holy places of Paris, Nevers (Saint Bernadette), Paray-le-Monial (Sacred Heart Apparitions), Lyon,

LaSalette, Ars (Saint John Vianney), and the Beaches of Normandy with a Mass at the US Foreign Cemetery. This is not a parish pilgrimage, but I wanted to make the parish family aware of the opportunity. The pilgrimage is a personal pilgrimage of mine and many people from different parts of the United States will be participating in it. All are welcome!

More updates next week! Oremus pro invicem (let's pray for one another)!

Email: Jeffrey.Kirby@charlestandiocese.org

Website: www.frkirby.com

Twitter: @fatherkirby

Radio Show: *Of First Importance*, RadioMariaUS

Weekly spirituality column: <https://cruxnow.com/author/fr-jeff-kirby>

Daily Reflections available through MorningOffering.com.