

# ST MARY'S CHURCH



14833 Kutztown Road ▪ Kutztown, PA 19530

[www.StMarysKutztown.com](http://www.StMarysKutztown.com)

[www.facebook.com/stmaryskutztown](http://www.facebook.com/stmaryskutztown)

Church, Meeting Rooms, Business & Parish Offices:

Phone : 610-683-7443 ▪ Fax : 610-683-7625

Email: [Parish@StMarysKutztown.com](mailto:Parish@StMarysKutztown.com)

Religious Education Center: 610-683-6454

Email: [RelEd@StMarysKutztown.com](mailto:RelEd@StMarysKutztown.com)

## PASTORAL MINISTRY

Pastor	Fr John Maria
Pastor Emeritus	Rev. Msgr Walter T Scheaffer
Transitional Deacon	Rev. Mr. N. Romero Brelinsky
Permanent Deacon	Dcn. Howard Schultz
Coordinator/Religious Educ	Mrs. Ann Pergosky
Director of Music Ministry and Parish Secretary	Mrs. Anne Sitarik

## PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Ladies Auxiliary	Theresa Bieak & Deb Massa
Men of St. Mary's	Mr. Tom Cengeri
Pro-Life Committee	Mr. John Tucker, O P
R C I A	Fr. John Maria

## DIOCESAN INFORMATION

Diocesan Policies and Procedures on Youth Protection:

[www.allentowndioocese.org](http://www.allentowndioocese.org)

Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator:

Wendy S Krisak, Direct Telephone: (800) 791-9209

Office of Safe Environment Secretary, Youth Protection and Catholic Human Services: Pamela Russo, MSW, MS ; PO Box F, Allentown, 181-5-1538 Telephone 610-871-5200 xt 2204

Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop, please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: [www.ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://www.ReportBishopAbuse.org) or 800-276-1562



## **MASS SCHEDULE**

Saturday Vigil	4:30 pm
Sunday	8:30, 11:00am
Daily Masses	7:30am (Monday – Friday) 8:00am (First Saturdays)

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT** - Every

Wednesday, 7-8 pm *and* First Friday of the Month, 8 until 9am

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM** – Baptism is celebrated at various times, often 11a Mass, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Baptisms are also scheduled privately upon arrangement with families. Parents must contact the Religious Ed Office to arrange Baptismal Prep sessions and learn all the details.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** - Saturday, 3:30-4:20p, Sundays 8:00-8:20; 10:30-10:50 am, Wednesdays 7:00-8:00p and by appointment

**SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK** – Those who are dangerously ill or facing serious surgery may receive this healing Sacrament. Please contact Father John Maria to make arrangements

**SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY** – Congratulations! Couples must contact Father John at least six months in advance of desired date. Marriage Preparation is required for proper celebration of a valid and Sacramental marriage

**PROSPECTIVE GODPARENTS/SPONSORS** asked to serve as Baptismal Godparents or Confirmation sponsor must request an eligibility certificate from the parish priest. To serve in this special role parishioners must: Be in full communion with the Catholic Church; Attend Mass weekly; have received Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation & Confirmation; Married individuals need be validly married in the Catholic Church.

Please contact the Parish Office and allow 2 weeks to process  
**HOMEBOUND** – Parishioners homebound and unable to attend Mass please contact the Parish Office to arrange visitation, to receive Holy Communion

**HOSPITALIZED** - Call the Rectory to notify of someone in the hospital so we can pray for and possibly visit them. Each hospital in our Diocesan boundaries is either covered by a local parish or has a priest on call at the hospital

**PARISH MEMBERSHIP** - Welcome to St. Mary's Parish! Please contact the Parish Office to meet with Father John and become registered. We also ask those who move to notify the parish

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** – Education for parish children occurs September 10 through April. Contact Religious Education office: 610-683-6454 for registration.

### **Center-based**

•Levels 1 to 5 meet every week, Sundays, 9:40-10:50am

•Level 6-8 meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays, 6-8pm

•Youth Group (9-12) Stay tuned for upcoming events.

**Home-based** Arrangements may be made for select grade levels, contact Ann Pergosky

THIRTY THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME, NOVEMBER 19, 2023

*We are a welcoming community called to deepen and share our faith*

THIRTY THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME, NOVEMBER 19, 2023

**MASS Intentions**

Mon	11-20	7:30a	David and Glenn Frantz
Tue	11-21	7:30a	Richard A. Law, Sr.
Wed	11-22	7:30a	William and Celestina Keller
Thu	11-23	9:00a	Robert Christman
Fri	11-24	7:30a	Gerry Foran
Sat	11-25	4:30p	Giovambatista Chiarelli
Sun	11-26	8:30a 11:00a	Sophie Porambo People of the Parish

*Altar flowers and Blessed Sacrament candle in memory of  
K. Heinz and Emilie Hofman last week.  
Altar flowers this week in memory of Frank and Joan Cochrane.*

**READINGS and CELEBRATIONS for the WEEK**

Sun	11-19	33 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time- Prov 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Th 5:1-6; Mt 25:14-30 or 25:14-15, 19-21
Mon	11-20	1 Mc 1:10-15, 41-43, 54-57, 62-63; Lk 18:35-43
Tue	11-21	2 Mc 6:18-31; Lk 19:1-10
Wed	11-22	2 Mc 7:1, 20-31; Lk 19:11-28
Thu	11-23	Thanksgiving Day- Sir 50:22-24; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Lk 17:11-19
Fri	11-24	1 Mc 4:36-37, 52-59; Lk 19:45-48
Sat	11-25	1 Mc 6:1-13; Lk 20:27-40
Sun	11-26	Solemnity Our Lord Christ, King of the Universe- Ez 34:11-12, 15-17; 1 Co 15:20-26, 28; Mt 25:31-46

**MUSIC MINISTRY**

	<b>THIS WEEK</b>	<b>NEXT WEEK</b>
4:30p	Skoronski, Nathan Casey, Peggy	Moore, Mark Casey, Peggy
8:30a	Talarico, Tim Cebenکو, Steve	Skoronski, Nathan Cebenکو, Steve
11:00a	Pirnot, Tom Talarico, Tim	Thomas, Cathy Talarico, Tim

**Collection info Online In Church Expenses**

Regular Collection	\$3,665.25	\$11,677.00	\$16,171.85
Building Fund	\$5.00	\$1,000.00	
Capital Campaign	\$155.00	\$898.00	
Parish Partnership	\$80.00	\$50.00	
Other Regular Income	\$420.00	\$363.00	

**HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR ONLINE GIVING?**

1. Visit our church website at [www.stmaryskutztown.com](http://www.stmaryskutztown.com)
2. Click on the Online Giving link
3. Complete the online registration form.  
It's that simple! For more info or help setting up your account please contact the parish office: 610-683-7443



**Please Pray for the Sick, and their loved ones:**

Logan Alkons	Ken Gorski	Joanne O'Connell
Caleb Bauer	Bijou Greenwood	Benedicta Otchere
Christopher Bennett	Muriel Hadnagy	Rick Padilla
Claudia Berg	Devon Hanna	Ed Pilarski
Greg Bradford	Jacqueline Hartz	Pat Regensburger
Monica Bradford	Linda Haurus	Rosemarie Reimert
Bradford family	Hannah Hayduk	Bill Pettit
David Byer	Kathy Henry	Megan Roth
Nadia Cahill	Lillian Karch	Nina Hertzog
Drew Cengeri	Michael Karch	Rundle
Meaghan Clark	Joanne Kear	Richard Rusconi
Colleen Wolff	Patricia Keeney	Sr. Mary Sapanara, MSC
Jerome Costanzo	Jane Kern	Tina Scatamacchia
Kim Costanzo	Milton Kern	Jim Sherman
Nancy Devlin-Litinsky	Cena Knowles	Barbara Shidisky
Dave Ebling	Henry Kryeski	Tracy Snyder
Trent Eidle	Edward & Rosemary Law	Nicole Sosik
Patricia Farabaugh	Harry Lewellen	Todd Tanis
Paula Fehlinger	Julie Lindsey	Ralph Touch
Kathleen Fink	Eva Malanczuk	Amy Turko
Joey Flecher	Dennis Martinsen	Christine VanDoorn
Tammy G.	Barry, Sharon Miller	Phillip Vazquez
Joe Galantino	Elaine O. Miller	Joseph Wawrzak
Michelle Galantino	Nikolette Nolte	Bonnie Wessner
Sandra George	Diana Novi	Emily Wickle
Lucy Ginsiorsky		

Contact office to update list: [secretary@stmaryskutztown.com](mailto:secretary@stmaryskutztown.com)

**Please Pray for all those serving our nation**

Keenan Albright	Anthony DiPietro	Nick Marakovits
Kyle Albright	Charles Douglass	Melissa Marks
Michael Barron	Joseph Douglass	Laura Miller
Andrew Barthol	Keith Essig	Spencer Morris
Frank M. Bieda	Ryan Flanagan	Heather O'Donnell
John Boyer	Kale Follweiler	Menaka Nayyar & Anthony Pirnot
Matthew Boyer	Michael Allen Haak	Jake Schmeck
Jonathan Cardé	Diane Henry	Phillip Talarico
Ryan Cengeri	Joshua Joseph	Steve Ziegler
Eric Cunningham	Dan King	
Timothy DeVall	James Knight	

Contact office to update list: [secretary@stmaryskutztown.com](mailto:secretary@stmaryskutztown.com)

### EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Sun 11.19 33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
2<sup>nd</sup> Collection – Diocesan Poverty Relief Fund  
Youth Mass, 8:30a  
Breakfast served, 8:30a-11:15a  
Catechist Breakfast, 9:45a
- Wed 11.22 Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7p
- Thu 11.23 HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY  
Daily Mass, 9a
- Fri 11.24 Parish Office closed
- Sat 11.25 Pray the Rosary, 4p  
2<sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership

### EVENTS NEXT WEEK

- Sun 11.26 SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD, CHRIST THE KING  
2<sup>nd</sup> Collection-Parish Partnership  
No Religious Educ.– Thanksgiving Break
- Tue 11.28 Faith Sharing, 10a
- Wed 11.29 Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7p
- Thu 11.30 Music ministry, 7p  
R.C.I.A., 7p
- Fri 12.01 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Adoration, 8-9a
- Sat 12.02 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday daily Mass, 8a  
Pray the Rosary, 4p  
2<sup>nd</sup> Collection – Christmas Flowers

**EARLY BULLETIN DEADLINE:** Send items by 12n ten days early; full-page items two full weeks in advance, thru Jan 07.

**PARISH MEMBERSHIP:** Welcome! Please register for parish membership. Call 610-683-7443 for an appointment. Learn about all the parish has to offer! *Please inform us if moving.*



**OFFERTORY ENVELOPES:** To begin receiving offertory envelopes, please contact the parish office: [secretary@stmaryskutztown.com](mailto:secretary@stmaryskutztown.com)



**ARE YOU a SNOWBIRD** traveling south for the winter? Tell the parish office, we'll hold mailings until your return. Call/email the office. Bon voyage!

**BAPTISM PREP:** The next meetings are 6p, Dec. 04 and 11. Call Ann Pergosky: 610-683-5454 to register.



**LADIES AUXILIARY CHRISTMAS SEASON COVERED DISH LUNCH MEETING:** 12n Tue. Dec. 05. All women of the parish are welcome. Please bring a covered dish to share. Small denomination gift cards for Mary's shelter donation accepted.

**SPAM MESSAGES:** Should you receive a "personal" style email or text message asking for money or gift card appearing to come from Fr. John and/or parish staff, please disregard them and even block the sender. Fr. John and the staff will *never ask you for money or gift cards.*

**GIVING FROM OUR BOUNTY:** This *bountiful* project is supported by our JR High Rel Ed, **Nov 12-Dec 03**. Cost of living increases have made an especially difficult time for many. The organizations that support families in need struggle. Visit the Gathering Area to choose gift and/or food item tags. Gifts support Lifeline, Friend, Inc., and Willow Brook.

☆Lifeline requests mother and baby items

☆Friend, Inc. seeks food donations for Christmas and children's Christmas clothing and toys.

☆Willow Brook residents in long-term care can feel isolated. A little cheer goes a long way to boost morale and aid recovery. You may even include a letter or care for a more personal connection.

Please visit Gathering Area table to select an item(s) and return gift items by Sunday, **Dec 03**, with tags securely attached, into the Gathering Area large boxes. Please do not wrap Gifts. *However, gift bags and wrapping paper donations welcomed.*

**If you take a gift tag do please return it by the Dec. 03 due date so it can be handed to recipient families.** *Thank you!*

### In November We Pray for Our Beloved Dead

**W**ith confidence, we turn to you, Lord God, and ask you to renew us in hope.

Look with mercy on our beloved departed friends and family

and those who have no one else to pray for them.

May our remembrance of them lead us to turn to you and offer our joys and sufferings for their merit.

Receive them into your kingdom and give them your peace.

Amen

### SCRIPTURE REFLECTION- DCN. N. ROMERO BRELINSKI

*Ora et labora*. This short Latin phrase for centuries has been the motto of the Benedictine order of monks. Even for those of us who are not monks or nuns, the message of this motto should be dear to us. Its meaning: Prayer and Work.

There can be a temptation to feel tension between our identities as Christians and our roles in the world and society. As citizens, we have responsibilities, duties, and expectations to fulfill. As followers of Christ, we believe that things above are most important. Sometimes it can seem like our natural cares are opposed to our pursuit of God's grace. But just the opposite is true!

The Scriptures this weekend offer us insight. The first reading from Proverbs contains an exultation for a worthy wife (an image of the Church as well as a description of a woman). The work of her hands surpasses drudgery or enterprise. Rather, it is born out her faith, the fact that she "fears the Lord." Her generosity to the poor and needy show that her faith and good works are inseparable.

In the Gospel, Jesus offers the parable of the "demanding master", who expects return on the talents he lends his servants. The lesson here is not that God judges us based on our material gains, but that our faith should not be left stagnant. The grace and blessings that we receive from God should bear fruit by our good works. Therefore, we can make "Ora et labora" our own motto, as we join together our prayer and our work.

*thank you*

The Ladies Auxiliary thanks the parish for all the support at Saturday's annual Holiday Bazaar. Countless hours in September, October and November spent preparing food and organizing vendors; donations of items and books to sell; generous prize basket donations and raffle ticket purchases; cheerful volunteers in the kitchen and rooms; help in setting up and taking down tables and decorations; and let's not forget the red-suited Jolly Old Elf for making an appearance at this busy time! We look forward to the Nov 2, 2024, Holiday Bazaar and doing it all again!

**2023 Holiday Bazaar Winners**

<b>Winner:</b>	<b>Basket:</b>	<b>Donated By:</b>
Angela Petersen	Home/Holidays	A Parishioner
Norma Mosley	Friends	Parishioner
Theresa Westcott	Love My Cat	A Parishioner
Touch Family	Baby Basket	A Parishioner
Barbara Kathy	Toys for Boys	A Parishioner
Louise DeVall	Star Wars Puzzles	A Parishioner
Pam Otruba	Garden Kits	A Parishioner
Donna Corson	Beauty for Girls	A Parishioner
Donna Bampton	Snack Basket	Mr. Food (Bill Fenstermacher)
Pat Keeney	Amazing Experiments	A Parishioner
Kay DeVall	Hot Dog Basket	A Parishioner
Mary Steltz	Halloween Basket	A Parishioner
Tamara Osle	Rasp. Wines	Joe Shidisky
Tamara Osle	Love My Dog!	A Parishioner
Savannah Weider	Gourmet Grilling	A Parishioner
Mary Dymeck	July 4 Basket	Craig Brinker
Debra Kenney	Sport Teams	Jane Ritter
Sandra Stern	Rasp. Wines	Joe Shidisky
Robert Hotalen	Scentsy Warmer	Zettles
Ruth Schuler	Thanksgiving Basket	A Parishioner
Cathy Rauenzahn	Go Penn State!	Jane Ritter
Anna Furst	Tratidisional Wines	Joe Shidisky
Nadine Blair	Tea Towels	J & A Lynch
Nadine Blair	Picnic Time	Sitariks
Kris Mammarella	Walking Sticks	HBTN Woodwork
Mary Dymeck	Go Eagles!	Jerry Jackson
Karen Wheeler	Well Set Table	Anna Furst
Patty Britcher	Win Big!	Sosiks
Theresa Merkle	Throw	Maria Podrosky
Donna Feiertag	NY Jets tickets	A Parishioner
Touch family	Homemade Bread	Sr. Bernard
Touch family	Homemade Bread	Sr. Bernard
Touch family	Homemade Bread	Sr. Bernard
T/A Fullington	Cash Prize: \$ 250	
Donna Corson	Cash Prize: \$ 500	
Benedicta Otchere	Cash Prize: \$1,000	

**BREAKFAST IS SERVED** THIS Sunday, 8:30-11:15a in the Social Hall. Get involved! Suzanne: 610-334-5385 or [midas8@msn.com](mailto:midas8@msn.com)

**ST. MARY'S NEXT SOUP KITCHEN** project approaches **Dec 23/24**. The Soup Kitchen serves 200-400 people. Look for donation table in gathering area. **Return All items by Dec 21**. Cook for the soup kitchen on Dec. 15 (12-4p). A few volunteers would help. Questions? Mary Alkons 610-683-5443



**CHRISTMAS OPLATKI:** The parish has purchased a limited supply of "oplatki" - the wafer bread included in many family gatherings with East European traditions at Christmas. We ask \$3 per package to cover expenses. First come, first serve! We may order more if our supply is depleted quickly. To purchase Oplatki, contact: 610-683-7443 or [parish@stmaryskutztown.com](mailto:parish@stmaryskutztown.com)



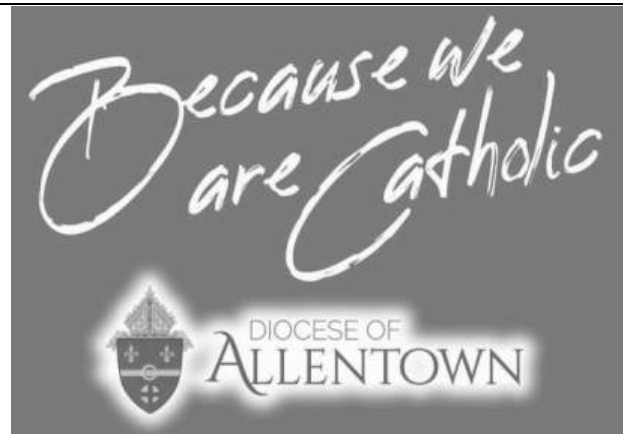
**POVERTY RELIEF FUND**

Diocesan Poverty Relief grants are funded by a special annual second collection. These grants, made possible through your generosity, support a wide range of local projects and services that alleviate and address poverty in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties.

This year's Poverty Relief Fund collection: Nov. 18-19

**ENDOWMENT FOR RETIRED PRIESTS**

Please Support the Retired and Infirm Priests of the Diocese of Allentown. The Diocese of Allentown will conduct its annual fund called, "Chosen, Blessed, Shared," to support the Endowment for the Care of Retired Priests. All gifts received will be used to support the rising costs of retirement care for those priests in good standing who have faithfully served, and the many who though retired continue to serve in our Diocese. Please consider a donation as part of your yearly giving. This is not to be confused with the yearly collection for the "National Appeal for Retired Religious" Dec. 8/9. [www.allentowndiocese.org/giving/endowment-care-retired-priests](http://www.allentowndiocese.org/giving/endowment-care-retired-priests)



**APPEAL IS UNDERWAY!** visit [BecauseWeAreCatholic.org](http://BecauseWeAreCatholic.org) to watch a video about the program. Thank you to every generous person who has supported the appeal already. Every penny helps!

*We are a welcoming community called to deepen and share our faith*

**DINE OUT -CHIPOTLE-** 4-8p, Nov 22 at Chipotle, Muhlenberg. Use code FVMQHZZ for online/app orders and **HGA Regional School** benefits from your purchase.

**COR JESU: 7-9p, Thu Dec 07-** a weekly diocesan worship event for Young Adults, starting in Advent. Each night will incorporate Adoration, Benediction, Confession, and Mass. Followed by fellowship afterwards. Dec. 7, 14, 21 at St. Ursula Parish, Fountain Hill

**ADVENT DAY OF PRAYER:** 9:30a-4p, Dec. 09, Mariawald Renewal Center, Reading. Advent is the time of promise! Explore the doors that await us during Advent with Sr. Nancy Iampietro as guide. 1094 Welsh Rd, 19607. Cost: \$40; Register 610-777-0135; [mariawaldcenter@gmail.com](mailto:mariawaldcenter@gmail.com)

**ST. MONICA MINISTRY Buffet Dinner and Bilingual Holy Hour in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe: 6p, Dec 12** Tue., Dec. 12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, at St. Theresa Church, Hellertown, and will be



preceded at 4p by a buffet dinner and basket raffle in the parish's Friendship Hall. Presider: Deacon Miguel Ramirez, of Our Lady of Mercy and St. Anthony of Padua Parishes in Easton, will offer a bilingual reflection on Our Lady of Guadalupe's maternal love for her children, and on her constant intercession

for those who have left the Church. Register for dinner: [allentowndiocese.org/monicaministry](http://allentowndiocese.org/monicaministry)

**HGA REGIONAL SCHOOL COUGAR CASH RAFFLE!** now-Feb. 02 visit [holygardianangelsregionalschool.square.site](http://holygardianangelsregionalschool.square.site) to purchase tickets. Proceeds benefit students. Last year prize nearly \$4,500!

**RETROUVAILLE:** Rediscover the Love in your Marriage. Thousands of couples have healed their marriages at Retrouvaille (*retru-vee*). Get help for marriage problems, difficulties or crises. Learn to build communication skills and increase intimacy. **Next weekend program: Feb. 16-18** at the Family Life Center in Malvern. Info or Register: 215-766-3944 or 800-470-2230. *All inquiries strictly confidential.* [www.HelpOurMarriage.org](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.org)

**Word of Life:** "We can't imagine loving a child whom we conceived more than we love Andrew. It is amazing how he fits our personalities so well... Adopting Andrew has made us more aware of God's power and of his love for us. We realize that he always has a perfect plan for our lives." ~ USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities; "An Adoption Love Story" on page six of this bulletin or: [respectlife.org/adoption-love-story](http://respectlife.org/adoption-love-story)

**READY.SET.READ! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** Tutor 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students needing extra support. No previous teaching experience required. Topton Elementary 3:30-4:20p OR Kutztown Elementary 3:30-4:30p; One hour/week, Oct. thru May. Background clearances require; training provided. Info: Darby Wiekrykas, United Way 610-685-4574 [darbyw@uwberks.org](mailto:darbyw@uwberks.org)

**EXPLORE \*NEW\* DIOCESAN EMPLOYMENT NEEDS**  
Visit: [www.allentowndiocese.org/about/employment](http://www.allentowndiocese.org/about/employment)

**REFLECTION...** by Rev. Leonard N. Peterson  
This week's parable has long been called "The Parable of the Talents." Right away we have a language problem because a talent was not a coin, but a weight. Its value depended on the metal involved, be it copper, gold, or silver. Silver being the most common metal at that time. So, the value of a talent of silver was considerable. It was worth about 15 years' wages for a working man. You may remember the wager that the fictional Messala bet against Judah Ben-Hur in the movie of that name was a thousand talents. A veritable fortune.

The useless servant in Christ's story stands for the scribes and Pharisees and their attitude to the law and the truth of God. Their whole attitude was to "build a fence around the law" so that it would remain intact.

Anything new was forbidden, so they "buried their talent," which led to a kind of paralysis of the truth of religion. Hence, their hatred of Jesus for His expansion of the Law of Moses.

Like the man who buried his talent, they wanted to keep things exactly as they had been for years. But Jesus taught that there can be no religion without a touch of freedom and adventure.

The parable stresses that we all have differing talents, in the sense of the word here meaning "gifts." God expects us to use our particular talent or talents, in that spiritual sense, for the glory of God and the good of our neighbor. We are not equal in talent, but we can be equal in our effort. So, each member of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, has been gifted.

The parable also teaches that those who are punished are the people who will not try. Here we come upon a truth taught so well by Gilbert Keith Chesterton, who wrote that "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried."

Here in the "vestibule" of our National Day of Thanksgiving, we can be grateful for sure of the talent or talents that God has given us, along with the special freedoms we enjoy in America that permit us to share them, along with our time and treasure, so that the poor among us may always have hope in their hearts also.

God love you and Happy Thanksgiving.



November is:  
National Adoption  
Awareness Month!

*We are a welcoming community called to deepen and share our faith*

# An Adoption Love Story.

My husband Bill and I have been married for six years. Having children and raising a family had always been our expectation. By the time we were married, most of our siblings and friends already had children, so of course we were excited and ready to be parents ourselves. We soon learned, however, that having children of our own might not be so easy. We made a few trips to multiple cities to be treated by wonderful doctors who have helped so many couples conceive, but everything we tried was unsuccessful. We felt so hopeless at times. Words can't even explain this experience of loss.

Fortunately, our marriage only grew stronger, because we were there for each other and continued to rely on God. This didn't always come easily, but it helped that Bill has a great sense of humor, and we were able to laugh at some of the crazy situations and conversations that come with infertility.

Since we knew our chances of becoming pregnant were small, it wasn't very long before we started talking about the possibility of adoption. However, it wasn't an easy decision, and I wondered if my heart was big enough to love an adopted child as I would my biological child. There were also so many other variables to consider, one of which was the expense involved, and we had already spent so much money on infertility treatments. We felt we had no control, but God reminded us again that He is always in control and that we could trust in Him.

So with prayerful discernment, we decided to start the process of adopting a child from Ethiopia. However, after it took nearly a year to get on the waiting list, the adoption program was put on hold for reasons that were unknown to us.

We were so frustrated that we started to feel as though maybe we just weren't called to have children. We then heard from friends who had adopted a newborn baby domestically after only a few short months. With this new encouragement, we switched gears and decided to adopt domestically, picking a nationwide agency rather than a state agency because it is usually faster.

We were so excited but also rather scared. We would be chosen by a birthmother and would be required to send pictures and letters to her frequently. Most likely, we would talk with the birthmother over the phone and meet her at the delivery. And there was always the chance she could change her mind, even days after the birth. I didn't know how I would feel about all this and wondered if we were setting ourselves up for more heartbreak. But all we could do was pray and try to leave it in God's hands.

Four months later, we received a call that a birthmother in Florida had chosen us. She was seven months pregnant with a boy. We couldn't believe it. We were finally going to have a baby. We talked with her a couple of times over the phone, and I never realized until then how lucky I was to marry such a talker, as Bill really helped the conversations flow smoothly.

On the birthmother's due date, we received the call that she was in labor. Bill and I dropped everything and hit the road to Florida to meet our son. Words can't even describe how we felt during that drive. We were so excited at the thought that we could be driving home with our son, yet at the same time we were so scared that we may be driving home alone. I wasn't sure we could handle that disappointment, and I wondered what she would think of us. Would she regret that she chose us? What would I say to the woman who was going to place her child with us? Along with these and all the normal fears of becoming a parent, I was also afraid that I wouldn't bond with our new son or feel that he was ours.

After arriving, we met the birthmother who was still in labor. She was so sweet and personable, and we sat with her to support her as best we could. A few hours later, our son Andrew was born. It was the most surreal experience.

We spent the next day and a half with Andrew and his birthmother in the hospital getting to know each other a bit. It was hard to know what to say to her, knowing she was making the hardest decision of her life, knowing the pain she must be experiencing, and feeling that I was the one causing this pain. It was such an emotional roller coaster to hold and look at this precious baby, wondering if I would really be his mother.

Thankfully, the birthmother decided to maintain her decision to place her child with us. Later that evening, Christmas Eve, Bill and I left the hospital with Andrew. It didn't take long before there was no doubt in our minds that he was our son, the greatest gift from God! He really is our Christmas miracle.

Andrew is two years old now, and it is so clear to Bill and me that God picked him for us. We can't imagine loving a child whom we conceived more than we love Andrew. It is amazing how he fits our personalities so well. More and more every day we are so thankful to his birthmother for her selfless decision.

It is so hard to express in words what a unique experience adoption has been for us. It has been quite a journey facing infertility, as well as so many unknowns and acts of kindness and sacrifice—all with so many emotions—which led to the growth of our family. There were times when our faith was shaken and we weren't sure if we could handle our cross. But adopting Andrew has made us more aware of God's power and of his love for us. We realize that he always has a perfect plan for our lives.

*\*Jenny and Bill (all names have been changed for privacy) would like to encourage you be open to the gift of adoption. Is God calling you to consider adopting a child or placing your child for adoption? To learn more information, contact your diocesan office.*

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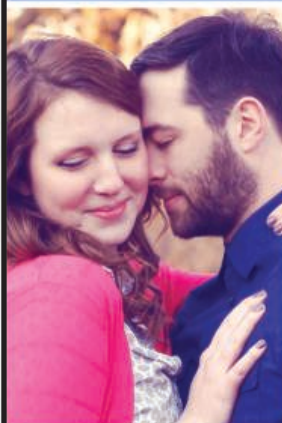
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