



ST. ISIDORE HARVESTER

A publication of St. Isidore Church for all registered parishioners, so that they may share in the vitality of our faith community



grandpa



Farewell TO OUR FRIEND



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Your Harvester Staff prays that your Holiday Season will be filled with *joyous memories* as we all celebrate the glorious birth of the Messiah. Our hope is that 2022 brings understanding amongst all peoples through living the Good News of the Lord Jesus.

Blessed Christmas and A Peace-filled New Year!

*Abby – Angie – Diane – Dorothy
Gloria – Kathy – Michael – Penni*



Harvester

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What proclaimed Christ's Birth?

By Michael Fassbender

The Star of Bethlehem is a beloved Christmas feature. While it is technically a part of the Epiphany story rather than the Nativity, it figures in many of our Christmas carols and crowns many Christmas trees. For centuries, theologians, scientists and everyday people alike have considered the nature of this star. A definitive answer continues to elude us.

There is no shortage of theories, but many can be dismissed. Meteors did not last long enough, while comets were generally seen as harbingers of disaster. No candidate has been found to support the supernova theory, and in any case, a supernova would not match the narrative. A star going supernova would get brighter, but it would not move in relation to the other stars. A supernova could not lead the Magi in their journey west.

The only astronomical theory that withstands scrutiny is one involving a conjunction. In the seventeenth century, Johannes Kepler suggested that a conjunction of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn could have been the Star of Bethlehem. Essentially, these three planets lined up in such a way that they appeared to viewers on Earth as if they were one new, bright object.

Planets revolve around the sun just as the Earth does, so their positions in the night sky shift. Because of this movement, conjunctions can occur several times within a fairly short timeframe; it is estimated that the conjunction Kepler traced appeared three times in 7 BC. It may seem as if this is too early, but it is generally believed that the year of Christ's birth was miscalculated when we adopted our current calendar, and a birth date in the last decade BC is most probable.

Attractive as this theory is, it is far from proven. Some suggest that the quest for a visible star-like phenomenon is misguided; the Magi were astrologers, and they may have been guided more by a horoscope they calculated than by a light they saw. For that matter, the Fathers of the early Church considered the "Star" to be a miraculous light, independent of the natural stars. It might have been an angel tasked to direct the Magi, or even an act of the Holy Spirit directly.

Lacking a way to test these theories, we will never know for sure what form the Star of Bethlehem really took.

It is more important to know where it led, and why.





Farewell to a True Friend

Our lives provide many opportunities for work, and much for enjoyment, but the opportunity to interview Tom Norton on the eve of his retirement from St. Isidore provided this Harvester staff member great pleasure and privilege. Meeting with Tom in his office decked with mementos of family, friends, and experiences, we sat down to talk of his time at St. Isidore, his plans, and the gifts of God's grace in his life and the life of his family.

St. Isidore Parish has known great leadership, compassion and vision in Tom Norton. Tom joined the parish staff in 1994 as a part-time Peace and Social Justice Coordinator. He took over from Carolyn Ford, who started our peace and justice ministries under Father Joel. Tom and his wife, Sue, had volunteered much in this ministry and Sue suggested Tom apply for the position when Carolyn was moving. Tom did so and describes how he learned as he went. "The Spirit got ahold of me," he says, and he furthered his work with a second part-time position in social concerns ministries at Resurrection Parish. While at Resurrection, in 1999, Tom started the work of combining area food pantries, leading to the creation of what later became known as Neighborhood Food Pantries. After leaving Resurrection, Tom worked part time as NFP's Executive Director until 2019.

Father Tony found the size of the parish too much for his vision of leadership as a priest when he came to St. Isidore in 2002 and asked Tom to serve as Parish Administrator, giving pastoral direction to the staff. When Father Jim came to lead St. Isidore, he wanted a more hands-on, administrative role for himself, and Tom shifted to work within Stewardship and Communication. Tom also helped Leonor Carvajal for a time in Evangelization, citing the huge work of teaching adults in a parish of this size.

Coming down to his last few months with us, his "biggest joy is working with dedicated parishioners." He speaks of the incredible influence St. Isidore has made on his family. Each of his four children, who grew up in the parish, are in helping professions. "This is where we learned to be disciples," said Tom. He credited Father Joel as a primary mentor and spiritual leader in his ministry career.

Tom said he would rather be a leader than a boss, although he certainly learned to take on that role too. He said as an introvert, he was a reluctant leader but that God called him to that, so he followed and trusted. Tom is still listening; he has a heart for this work and hopes to volunteer or work part-time in ministry. His goals for retirement center on "Three Gs: Golf, Grandkids, and Gainful part-time employment". He laughed in saying that the last one should happen if only because Sue is still fully employed and she may wish him to be out a bit from the house.

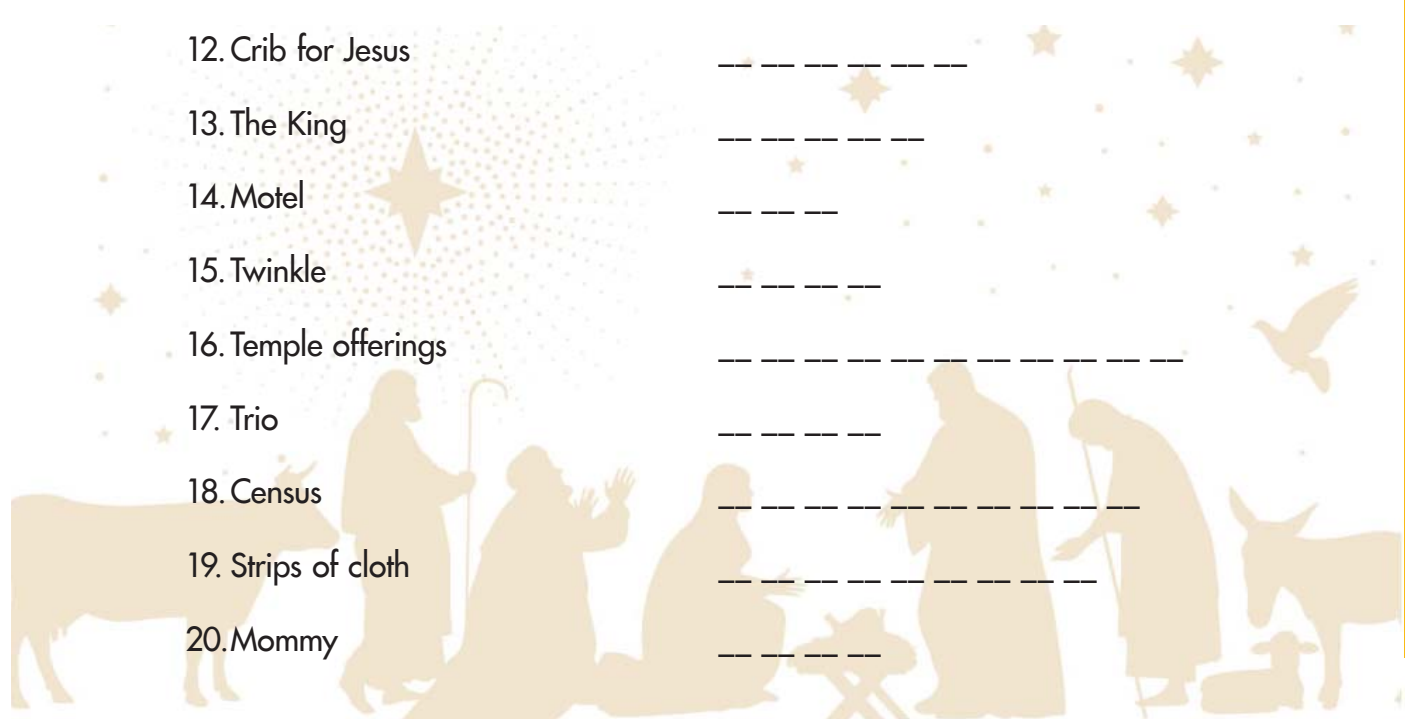
Father Jim had joked with Tom that he had survived four pastors in his time with us. Tom smiled in response that four pastors survived him. His tenure encompassed all of us, and his deep kindness, compassion, humor, and quiet strength of vision have lifted each of us. Tom's gentle way of saying hello, of looking at you like God's own had just walked up, of truly listening, are gifts of God's grace to us all. We will miss him very much but know better than to get in the way of someone listening to God and walking the path he is called to.

By Penni Cannova

A Christmas Narrative Challenge

In the beginning Gospels of Luke and Matthew we learn of the birth of the Messiah. We have heard and read the story many times. The following "clues" refer to people, places and items mentioned in these chapters

1. Prophet who prepared the way _____
2. Baa Baa watchers _____
3. Mary's pregnant relative _____
4. Perfume _____
5. Speechless man _____
6. God with Us _____
7. Angel _____
8. Prophetess _____
9. Hometown _____
10. Country of refuge _____
11. The carpenter _____
12. Crib for Jesus _____
13. The King _____
14. Motel _____
15. Twinkle _____
16. Temple offerings _____
17. Trio _____
18. Census _____
19. Strips of cloth _____
20. Mommy _____



There Is Still Hunger

By Dorothy Jaskey

During the warmer months, the Focus on Hunger Ministry would collect food and other basic staples once a month on a Saturday morning outside of the Ministry Center. Members of the Knights of Columbus and the Hispanic community would help.



Collecting food for those in need continues. There are baskets in the narthex awaiting your donations. These items are taken weekly to the food pantry Lutheran Church of the Master in Carol Stream. There they are combined with donations from other churches and the Northern Illinois Food Bank. The food and staples date checked and are given to people registered with the Neighborhood Food Pantries and at Colony Park.

So, remember when you go shopping, buy an extra can, jar, box or package of food, because there is still hunger among our neighbors.



Watch the bulletin for an announcement regarding another Focus on Hunger project, scheduled for Saturday, January 29 starting at 11:15 am till 12:30 pm. The Kids Against Hunger Packing Event at Stratford Square Mall will be seeking volunteers to help pack food for the families in Nicaragua.





More Than Socialization

By Angela Orlando

The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) meets monthly and while they socialize, they also do a whole lot of good.

The past several pandemic months have curtailed most of the fundraising BUT these women carry on. All but a few meetings for the last year and a half have been on ZOOM - difficult but productive.

The CCW was still able to continue one of their projects which involves Catholic education. Each year the CCW provides a small monetary scholarship for a student entering 6th, 7th or 8th grade at St. Isidore School. The process is simple and rewarding for both the student and the CCW members. In early March a notice of the scholarship offering is sent to the school office and staff distributes the information



to the students and their parents. The announcement is also included in the Parish Bulletin. Scholarship applications are due mid-April.

The student must send an application letter which covers several points: we ask for indication of school spirit, evidence of school involvement, importance of academics, student's service activities. CCW Executive Board members

then judge the application letter on those items as well as spelling, grammar and organization.

This past spring, the process began and the essays submitted were exceptional. The recipient chosen was Josie Smith. Her monetary scholarship was sent to the school office. Josie received a framed award certificate. At the October Membership meeting, the members met Josie and her family where she read her essay for the members.



After the business meeting, the women enjoyed the fun of a baby shower with gifts which were sent to Nativity House which cares for new mothers.

Masked and socially distanced, our members continue their mission of Gospel Values which support Women and Family.

October is Respect Life Month and in that honor CCW was asked to help support Nativity House. Located in Lockport, Nativity House serves as a house of hospitality for first-time mothers in need of residence. They take in mothers who have chosen to have their babies rather than abort them. At the moment, there are two mothers in residence at the House.

With that in mind, CCW held a baby shower at the October meeting. Members were invited to bring in unwrapped baby gifts. This was anything from essentials to clothing up to 2T sizes. And, what's a baby shower without some fun shower games to play.

Baby gifts were delivered November 6 to Nativity House.



Marriage Prep Process AT ST. ISIDORE

By Abby Defino



When planning a wedding, top of mind items and “to-do’s” always include the venue, the flowers, the dress, and a variety of other specifics that will make every couple’s wedding dream a reality on their big day. Often what could be overlooked or not immediately thought of is everything that is necessary to get in order for your ceremony to take place in the church – the most important part of the entire day! While it takes ample time to get details in order, the marriage prep process at St. Isidore is quite simple.

All planning is done through the parish office. You call to find available dates or ask if a date that you have in mind is available. Once your date is chosen, you will have the most important piece of information to plan everything else. Shortly after your date is set, you receive paperwork outlining all the steps to complete before the big day. This includes details on prep courses to be taken, fees, and a checklist of all the information you need to provide to get married in the church. When you choose your wedding date, the day of your rehearsal should also be considered, typically 1 – 2 nights before the wedding.

Preparing for your marriage celebration at St. Isidore involves the marriage prep courses that must be completed prior to your wedding day. You will receive date options for both sessions. One of these prep sessions is called FOCCUS. During FOCCUS, you and your future spouse will sit down and answer an array of questions about each other, your relationship, faith, vision for your future together and more. Your answers are submitted and scored. When your score is ready for review, each couple sets up time with a priest or deacon to assess the similarity in both of your answers. The purpose of this is not to get graded on your answers, but to work through and discuss how and why your answers differed in certain spots. The course helps you to better understand your partner and where you both stand on a variety of topics.

The second course completed by each couple prior to marriage is Becoming One. This course is led by Tom and Vicki Dau here at St. Isidore. While at Becoming One,

Tom and Vicki lead all the couples in group discussions regarding your relationship, how to solve problems and a multitude of other topics that can help you prepare for what to expect once you become one. It is incredibly helpful to have these prompts given to you to discuss with your partner, and heartwarming to talk through a lot of the discussion with other couples going through the same process. At first, it seems nerve-wracking to open up in front of other people, especially people you do not know, but the Daus are incredibly comforting and make it so easy to open up and share with the others in the group.

While the prep courses are the bulk of what needs to be done during your preparation, the checklist outlines other items including Baptism and Confirmation certificates. Another is the music and liturgy form. You are provided with a booklet that includes the choices for readings and music for your wedding mass. You should receive this shortly after setting your date. There is a sheet included in the booklet where you can record all the parts of the mass. After making those decisions, and as you get a little closer to your date (typically 8 – 10 weeks out), the couple meets with Dr. Anne to discuss your music choices.

Within 60 days of the wedding, you need to obtain your marriage license so you have it for the rehearsal. About one week from your wedding day, you talk through the entire Mass again with a St. Isidore wedding coordinator. This person will walk you through all the details of your ceremony prior to your rehearsal.

A lot to do during such a busy and exciting time, the process being detailed from the start helps all couples stay ahead of their tasks, and ensure they are fully prepped and ready for a beautiful day and celebration of love.

Missy, Luna, Izzy, Bella, Toga. Parishioners?

All special ones to you, each giving unconditional love. On a sunny Saturday October 2, we celebrated the Feast of Saint Francis with a blessing of animals. Deacon Dan greeted furry, feathery, fluffy, slimy and spikey friends of all shapes and sizes which were welcomed to the Pet Blessing celebration.

Pray for Our Pets. You blessed us with all living creatures. ... Kindly bless my pet. May my pet continue giving me joy and remind me of Your power. Everyday.



It's all about your Legacy

By Corie Alimento, Principal

Whenever I am interviewing a candidate for an open teaching position, I always ask the question, "How do you stay on top of trends, events, or topics in education?"

The answer I am looking for is through attending professional development, professional memberships, reading journals/scholarly articles, blogs, and books written by known names in our field, etc. I get even more excited when candidates answer this question through the lens of Catholic education.

As an educational leader, it's even more important for me to stay abreast of educational research. Not too long ago I read a book about Catholic education entitled *Weathering the Storm: Moving Catholic Schools Forward*. This book discusses critical elements that insure the successful future of a Catholic School. Obviously, Mission and Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Governance and Leadership, and Operational Vitality are the pillars that hold up a Catholic school, but the important components are the details within each pillar.

On October 20th, we had the remarkable opportunity to witness some of those details in action when we celebrated Grandparents' Day. It is this extraordinary group of people who laid the foundation of faith for you and your family. As we celebrate one hundred years of stories and history of our school, their stories, their examples, their hard work, their moral values, and their beliefs have molded you and your children into who you are today. St. Isidore Parish and School is proud to partner with you and your families on this profound journey. Together, with parents and grandparents, we help our students find God's truth, beauty, and goodness in all we are, all we see, and all we do. This is our mission. This is our legacy.



CELEBRATING YOUR LEGACY GRANDPARENT DAY





Another part of the “details” is taking an active role in parish life at St. Isidore. While we take our faith formation at school very seriously, it is important for our families to model their faith through attendance at Mass, participation in the sacraments, and being actively involved in the school and parish. While Covid has caused some families to step back from attending Mass in person, I encourage you to bring your family back. The connectedness you will feel to our parish and school will be beyond measure.



Blessings,
Corie Alimento, Principal - St. Isidore Catholic School

If you would like to discover the Academic, Social & Spiritual legacy St. Isidore Catholic School established over 100 years ago, please contact Gloria Lorusso, Director of Advancement at glorialorusso@saintisidoreschool.org. There's a place for your family here!



Christmas Challenge Answers:

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1. John | 6. Emmanuel | 11. Joseph | 16. Turtledoves |
| 2. Shepherds | 7. Gabriel | 12. Manger | 17. Magi |
| 3. Elizabeth | 8. Anna | 13. Herod | 18. Enrollment |
| 4. Myrrh | 9. Nazareth | 14. Inn | 19. Swaddling |
| 5. Zechariah | 10. Egypt | 15. Star | 20. Mary |

