

St. Michael's & St. Mary's

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The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

December 28, 2014



St. Michael's and St. Mary's Parishes would like to extend a warm welcome to all who are visiting us or are new to the area. If you are not currently registered at St. Michael's or St. Mary's and consider this your Parish, please call the Rectory at 729-2058.

St. Michael's	PO Box 406, Fairbury, NE 68352	Phone: 729-2058
St. Mary's	5th & Amanda Streets, Alexandria, NE	
St. Michael's Prayer Chain	Carmen Juarez: 729-3623	
St. Michael's/St. Mary's Secretary	Carolyn Osborne: 729-5387	Mobile: 300-0148

St. Mary's Parish Council: Peggy Niederklein, Rhonda Burkhart, Donna Rut, Daryl Anderson, Trish Endorf **Trustees:** Bob VanWesten and Bob Bachle

St. Mary's PCCW: Deb Vanwesten

St. Michael's Parish Council: Brenda Mannschresk, Doug Kapke, LeAnn Krause, Dave Panko, Dave Banahan, Bruce Busing, Chad Mans, Matt Umland, **Trustees:** Randy Prellwitz and Keith Mach

St. Michael's PCCW: Brenda Mannschreck

Knights of Columbus: Joshua Whitney

CCD Coordinator: Carolyn Whitney

Parish News & Upcoming Events

- **BULLETIN:** If you have news for the bulletin, please call the Rectory 729-2058 or contact Carolyn 729-5387 or email carolyn@stmichaelsfairbury.org News must be in Thursday by 10:00 AM to be in the week's bulletin.
- **ADOPT A PRIEST:** Our Deanery is taking part in the "Adopt a Priest" program. St. Michael's has adopted **Fr. Leo Seiker**; please keep him in your prayers.
- **SEMINARIAN'S OF THE WEEK:** Please keep our Seminarian's of the week, **Matthey Prochaska and Rev. Mr. Cyrus Rowan**, in your prayers.

Ministers' Schedules for Next Weekend

	5:30 PM	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Acolyte	Joe Busing	Bob VanWesten	Steve Graff
Lector	Randy Prellwitz	Scott DeWald	Charlie Barringer
Server	Peyton Grubbs		Paul Mach
Server	Ryan Umland		Joey Whitney
Organ/Piano	Carolyn Osborne	Lorrie Hoffstetter	Allen Scheer
Gifts/Greeters	Dianna Armstrong	Richie & Rhonda Burkhart	Marge Gregory
Collection	LeAnn Krause and Dave Panko		

Our Offering to God Last Weekend	St. Michael's	\$ 5128.00
	St. Mary's	\$ 278.00

Please pray for: Rosalie Hamm, Betty (Morgan) Brackle, Bob Seigel, Iola Busing, Rose O'Keefe, Vonja Scheer, Lorraine Callison, Doug Wiedel, Leona Gaydusek, Norma Bernasek, Jim Cortney, Rozella Prellwitz, Zachary Rowe, Bill Muller, Noelle Salazar, Bernie Boerner, Paul Prellwitz, Brad Eveleth, Kathy Blobaum, Bob McCord, Ed Lytle, LeRoy Prellwitz, Rita Stone, Lois Muller, Catherine Nutsch, Chase Guthals, Graysen Snyder, Military Personnel, all the unborn children & their parents, pro-life legislation, and anyone else who maybe ailing. *If you or someone you know would like our parish family to join you in prayer for their special needs, please contact the parish office.*

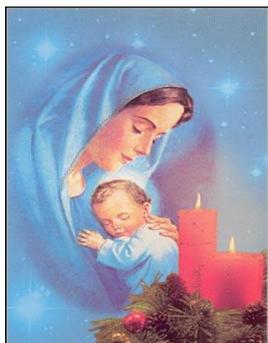
THIS WEEK'S MASS SCHEDULE

Monday	December 29	NO MASS	St. Michael's	NO MASS
Tuesday	December 30	12:10 PM	St. Michael's	Melvin Nespor+
Wednesday	December 31	4:00 PM	St. Michael's	The People of the Parishes
Wednesday	December 31	6:00 PM	St. Mary's	All Souls Day Intentions of Robert & Donna Milius
Thursday	January 1	9:00 AM	St. Michael's	All Souls Day Intentions of Twyla Bray
Friday	January 2	12:10 PM	St. Michael's	Norman Medina+
Saturday	January 3	5:30 PM	St. Michael's	All Souls Day Intentions of Rita Stone
Sunday	January 4	8:00 AM	St. Mary's	The People of the Parishes
Sunday	January 4	10:00 AM	St. Michael's	All Souls Day Intentions of Rhonda Cary

Confessions	St. Michael's	Saturday	4:45 PM to 5:15 PM
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Daily Mass: Please check Mass schedule carefully for Mass times this week!!!

NEW ITEMS



- **Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary:** Mass schedule for the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. **December 31st at 4:00 p.m. at St. Michael's; December 31st at 6:00 p.m. at St. Mary's; Thursday, January 1st at St. Michael's at 9:00 a.m.** Please make note of this and work this celebration of Mary's motherhood of the Church in to your schedule.

- **Thank you!!** We would like to thank everyone who helped with the ministries for Christmas Masses; acolytes, servers, ushers, lectors and choir.

- **Ministries Schedule:** The ministry schedules can be picked up in the back of the church. Remember, if you are unable to serve your ministry, it is your job to find a replacement.
- **Word Among Us:** We have FREE copies of the Word Among Us for the month of *January*. Please pick yours up today and take home for daily devotions.
- **Notice:** The Diocese of Lincoln requires that its employees and volunteers report any allegations of physical abuse or neglect of a minor or elder connected with church related activity to law enforcement, consistent with the requirements of Nebraska law. If anyone has information that a minor or elder is being or has been subjected to physical abuse or neglect please report it immediately to local law enforcement or to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services toll-free number 1-800-652-1999, and also to any Parish Pastor, School Administrator, Teacher, or to any Diocesan official at the Catholic Chancery (402-488-0921), so that immediate steps may be taken for the protection of the minor or elder.
- **Thought of the week:** Let us dedicate ourselves to thankfulness, instead of worry.
- **Diocese of Lincoln Natural Family Planning** Creighton Model Introductory Sessions for January 2015 will be held Thursday, January 8 and Tuesday, January 20 at 7:00 p.m. Pre-registrations is required. For more information call 488-2040.
- **Catholic Divorced Survival Guide:** Millions of Catholics get civilly divorced, and it affects us all. Maybe you or someone you know has the breakdown of a marriage, and you know how painful it can be. No matter how long it's been, the Church IS HERE to help and heal. That's why a new, 12-week support group called the Catholic Divorce Survival Guide will begin February 2, 2015 from 7-9 p.m. at John XXIII Center in Lincoln. The cost is \$50 and space is limited so register soon by calling 402-488-2040 or email catholicflo@cdolinc.net

- **Theology of the Body:** Fr. Sean Kilcawley will offer a 12 week seminar starting February 4th on John Pal II's teaching on Human Love in the Divine plan in order to deepen our understanding of what it means to be created in God's image. This seminar is for single people who are looking for tools to help them to deepen their understanding of their identity as children of God, married couples who want to deepen their own relationship and learn how to pass on the truth about sex and sexuality to their children, teachers, catechists, and anyone involved in marriage ministries. To register, call 402-488-2040 or email catholicflo@cdolinc.net. Cost is \$50.00
- **New Year's Ministries:** For each New Year's Mass, we will need an acolyte, lector, keyboardist and two servers. If you will be in town and can help, your assistance will be greatly appreciated. This weekend there will be a sign-up sheet in the back of the church with all the available slots for these Masses. Let's get these slots filled as soon as possible.
- **St. Mary's Cemetery Fence:** *We have reached the goal of \$30,000.00. Thank you to everyone who donated to the project.*



- **2015 Calendars and Church Envelopes:** The 2015 Church calendar's and Church Envelopes for next year are in the back of the church at St. Michael's and St. Mary's. Please pick yours up this weekend.
- **Census:** We are updating our census records. These are included with your church envelopes. Please check over the following information and make any additions or corrections. If you know your Sacrament information, please include that also. Please return them in the collection basket or drop off at the parish office.
- **College Students:** We are collecting college student's addresses so we can send them correspondence. Please email their addresses to carolyn@stmichaelsfairbury.org.
- **CCD:** Please have a Blessed New Year! We resume classes on January 7th.

- **Website:** You can find St. Michael's/St. Mary's website at www.stmichaelsfairbury.org. You can view the weekly bulletins and monthly calendar.
- **Best Choice Labels:** Please continue to save you labels, and put them in the container at the back of the church. For every 1000 labels we collect, we receive \$30.00, so keep collecting the labels.
- **Guide to Planning a Catholic Funeral:** On the back table, are copies of "A Guide to Planning a Catholic Funeral. The booklets have Scripture readings, music selections and a planning guide to help you plan for funerals. **You may fill these out now, so your family will know what your wishes are, in the time of passing and it will be something they will not have to worry about.** You may turn them in to the office or you may keep at you home.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

By Fr. William Saunders

I had heard that the Christmas song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written to help teach children catechism. Do you know anything about it?

Beginning with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England in 1558, the Roman Catholic Church and any practice of the faith was strictly forbidden. Some of the various penal laws against Catholicism included the following: The Mass was outlawed. Priests were expelled from the realm, and threatened with the charge of high treason with the punishment of being hung, drawn, and quartered for returning and offering Mass. Any Catholic harboring a priest in the home or allowing him to offer Mass was subject to the same penalty. Catholic citizens were not allowed to vote, to hold property, to be witnesses in court, or to have weapons. Anyone who did not attend Protestant services was fined and imprisoned for repeated offenses. All Catholic schools were closed and instruction in the faith was forbidden. Anyone appointed to a civil office had to take an oath denouncing the Pope and the belief in transubstantiation, thereby in effect preventing any Catholic from such positions. These laws remained in effect until April, 1829 when King George IV reluctantly signed the Emancipation Bill, granting political and religious freedom to Catholics. However, to this day the King or Queen of the United Kingdom cannot be a Roman Catholic.

Please note that these same penal laws were enforced in Virginia until the time of the Revolutionary War. Also, the intensity of enforcement of these laws depended upon the particular reign: for example, during the time of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell (1642-60), the Puritan Parliament even outlawed the celebration of Christmas.

Therefore, the song The Twelve Days of Christmas was written in England using seemingly secular images or symbols to help catechize children in the faith. The "true love" mentioned in each stanza does not refer to an earthly suitor, but to Almighty God. The "me" to whom the gifts are presented refers to any baptized Catholic. The purpose of the repetition is not only for the sake of pedagogy, but also emphasizes God's continual renewal of His gifts to mankind.

The **partridge in a pear tree** is Christ. In nature, a mother partridge will feign injury to lure predators away from her defenseless nestlings. In the same way, our Lord protects us, vulnerable human beings, from Satan. The pear tree symbolizes the salvation of mankind, just as the apple tree symbolizes Adam and Eve's Fall from Grace.

Two turtle doves represent the Old and New Testaments. Also, Jewish couples of modest income offered two turtle doves instead of the customary lamb as a sacrifice to God when they presented their newborn child in the Temple. Interestingly, our Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph offered a sacrifice of two turtle doves for the presentation of our Lord (cf. Luke 2:22-24).

Known for their beauty and rarity, the **three French hens** signify both the gifts of the Magi (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), and the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

The **four calling birds** are associated with both the four evangelists and their gospels' Saints (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John); and the four major prophets' Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Five golden rings have a two-fold significance. A ring, or a circle, has no beginning or end but is continuous. Thereby, the ring reminds us of both God's eternity, His permanent, faithful, and continuous love for us and the circle of faith God's love for us, our love for Him, and our love for our neighbors. The number five also signifies the first five books of the Old Testament the Pentateuch or Torah (the books of law for the Jewish people).

The **six geese a-laying** represent the six days of creative work recounted in Genesis.

However, in Judaism, seven was a number of perfection. The **seven swans a-swimming** continues the Genesis theme, reminding us that God's plan included not just the six days of creating but also the seventh day of rest; we in turn must not forget to make Sunday a holy day by worshipping God at Mass, spending time with our loved ones, and relaxing. Moreover, the seven swan's a-swimming refers to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven corporal works of mercy, the seven spiritual works of mercy, and the seven deadly sins.

The **eight maid's a-milking** signifies the eight beatitudes and, at that time in our Church, the eight times during the year prescribed for the faithful to receive Holy Communion.

The **nine ladies dancing** are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit and the nine choirs of angels.

The Ten Commandments are represented by the **ten lords a-leaping**.

Eleven pipers piping are the eleven faithful apostles at the time of the resurrection and ascension. (Remember that Judas, one of the Twelve, betrayed our Lord and committed suicide.)

Finally, the number twelve for the Jewish people represented completion and fullness. Therefore, the **twelve drummers drumming** are the twelve Minor Prophets, the twelve apostles (particularly the original 11 plus St. Matthias who replaced Judas), and the twelve tribes of Israel.

During the Christmas season, we should keep in mind the significance of this carol. Actually, I used to find the repetition and lengthiness somewhat irritating until I learned of its historical and religious significance. A good practice would be for parents to teach the carol in light of the history of persecution and the catechesis presented.

