

OUR LADY OF VICTORY

An Advent message from Father Alan:

One of the best ways to “keep Christ in Christmas” ... in contrast to drowning in an overly secular and “consumeristic Christmas”, is to be purposeful about a spiritual Advent: we quiet ourselves daily with some Advent prayer and reflection; we celebrate a meaningful Advent Sacrament of Reconciliation; in our Christmas giving we include generosity to those in need. These are meaningful ways to help prepare to welcome the birth of Christ again in our lives.

In thinking about our world situation, I would like to suggest that this Advent, we might also focus on recognizing Christ in the immigrant and refugee. Later on during the Christmas Season we will have the annual Immigration Sunday (on Epiphany). One of the facts that we recall in this dual celebration is that with their flight into Egypt, Jesus, Mary and Joseph were the first refugees of the Christian era. And so indeed, many today who are fleeing violence or poverty in their home country reveal the face of Christ to us...if we truly stop and consider their situation, and perhaps even look into their eyes.

Pope Francis so often uses four verbs in describing a Christian response to the stranger in our midst. His verbs are **Welcome, Protect, Promote, and Integrate**. How might prayer and meditation on these words transform our lives this Advent? Pray, read, and reflect on how we might be more **welcoming** and embracing of newcomers to our community. How can we help **protect** and defend their rights and human dignity? We know that we Americans dearly value our “freedoms”....how do we **promote** their freedom? These attitudes will lead to the **integration** of newcomers in our schools, churches, and communities, instead of their rejection or isolation.

Our Social Concerns Committee and I will be meeting during Advent to begin educating ourselves and to prayerfully reflect on these issues. We invite you to find ways to join us on this Advent-Christmas Journey. I hope we will become beacons of light and joy and hope this Advent-Christmas for one another and others. Let us honor and welcome Christ in immigrants and refugees, and all newcomers in our community and country.

Blessings of light and peace on your Advent days!

This
Issue:

page 2

A TIME TO
RETREAT...

page 3

Parish Happenings
A Bit from Gerry Leonard
a Franciscan Associate

page 4 & 5

San Pedro, Guatemala:
The Village That Stole
Our Hearts
New Members

page 6

Finding One's Roots in
Ireland

page 7

Another Fall
Festival Success

SPECIAL NOTE



A TIME TO RETREAT...

On October 3, 2019, at the Lake House at Xanadu Island Resort near Battle Lake, 30 women gathered for an Upper Room Retreat. This wonderful opportunity was planned and facilitated by Our Lady of Victory parishioners Diane Aschnewitz and Teresa Thompson, who are also both founding members of our parish women's prayer group known as WiNGS. Jill Fisher provided the support of coffee and morning pastries, and Mary Loreno shared her Cheesecake Charism by treating us to afternoon dessert. The key player in the day was felt in the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the inspired spirituality and gifted messages of our retreat leader, Gina Bauer.

Gina came to us from South St. Paul. She graduated with a degree in theology from the University of St. Thomas, and earned her Master's in Theological Studies from the University of Dallas Institute for Religious and Pastoral Studies. Gina has served as a youth minister, pioneering parish programs throughout Minnesota. Her animated presentation style clearly would be engaging for youth, as it was for those of us privileged to experience her at this retreat. Her biography cites years of experience training and mentoring dioceses, parishes, families, youth and young adults, men's and women's groups, and youth ministry teams throughout the country. She is married and a mother to four children, and is steeped in her knowledge of the Catholic faith.

Gina began with the beautiful verse from the 43rd chapter of Isaiah, which reads, "I have called you by name, and you are mine." With the awareness of the importance of both God's holy name and our own, each person at the retreat took a turn to say her name, that she is in the Upper Room (finding that sense of a holy place), and to share a word describing her feeling at the moment. Then with each person, the entire group would say back that woman's name. After this centering opening of community, Gina's sharing began.

While I did take notes, it would be very hard to capture all of the things that stood out to me in a logical format. So instead, the following are some of the many points of wisdom which Gina shared with us:

- Life itself is a calling, a call to a higher, better life, because we are made for God.
- Rule of the Red Sea: be calm and confident, and allow God to work.
- To be content at times of anxiety, turn your problems over to Jesus. Remember: There is a God and it is not any of us. If anything steals your contentment, is it greater than Jesus? What is the umbrella over your head that is keeping you from soaking in God's graces?
- Can I hear Jesus in my heart? If not, what is blocking?
- Do not be afraid of failing. When Jesus fell on the ground carrying the cross, He made the ground holy.
- But try not to be careless in our walk through life, such as in how we treat our bodies. Ask the Lord, "What does temperance, joy, etc. look like to You?"
- We have immortal souls; we are made to live forever. Holy Communion is like our jet fuel to get to heaven.
- Always be ready to give Christian witness, either in words or through acts of love. Pray for others out of love.
- In raising kids, say yes when you can so when you say no they can take it.
- To become holy, integrate our heads and hearts, and build stronger relationships with each other.
- Try to stop being so offended, and instead try to hear what God might be saying/teaching through this situation.
- Each of us is called to an exclusive, non-repeatable relationship with God.
- Suggested prayer: Dear God, if I ever lose you, I give you permission to find me.
- We can always make our prayers bigger. For example, when praying for a daughter in college, expand to



PARISH HAPPENINGS

include a prayer for all college students throughout the world. Always remember we have a BIG God.

- Through the Virgin Mary, every Eve has a new beginning. St. John Paul II wrote that women imbued with the Spirit of the Gospel can aid humanity.
- Suffering is temporary, victory is forever. The resurrection is our victory. God is a God of life revealed.
- Gina suggested looking up and praying the Novena of Surrender to the Will of God. In essence, one prays: *Jesus, I ask that you take care of this, and if I'm to do something, show me what.*

A significant part of the afternoon involved Gina reading from the Second Chapter of the Book of Sirach. Each of us reflected and prayed about a word that stood out to us in that text, and then shared with the entire group the word and how it applies to us. It was a beautiful way for us to get to know each other on a deeper level, and understand ourselves better as well. In small groups, we prayed together for the needs of each other.

So, you might ask, why are retreats important? Having participated in this one, many answers come to mind. Retreats provide time away from routine that can deepen one's relationship with God, and on this retreat, with women friends, old and new. The retreat team had selected surroundings that were beautiful and attended to all kinds of well-presented details, including beverages, food, and breaks for fun conversation. The spiritual messages of our gifted retreat leader refreshed and revitalized faith and a desire to pray. Be on the lookout for retreats that God may have in the works for you.

by Deb Forstner

A Bit From Gerry Leonard, a Franciscan Associate

In the 70s I worked as a secretary for Sister Lillian Kroll, a sister of the Franciscan order at Holy Spirit Parish in St. Cloud where we lived at the time. We kept in touch over the years by visits and Christmas cards.

The Lord never speaks to me in the quiet times during adoration. But, oh boy, the sleepless nights - I sometimes have to hang on to my hat!! During one of the sleepless nights, I was told to look into becoming an associate in the Franciscan order in Little Falls, MN.

I made a date with Sister Lillian and went to Little Falls, MN to spend the night. She made an appointment with the associate coordinator Geri Dietz. I met with her a few times. She gave me material to read regarding St. Francis and St. Clare and about becoming an associate. I read all the material, and in my Bible I found a prayer that I had copied from another book a long time ago. It was a prayer composed by St. Francis.

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22	Children's Liturgy of the Word
Dec. 3	Social Concerns 5:30 p.m.
	Stephen Ministry 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 3, 10, 17	RCIA
Dec. 4, 11, 18	Faith Formation
Dec. 5, 12, 19	St. Anne Quilters
Dec. 7, 21	St. Joseph Men 8:00 a.m.
	WinGs 9:00 a.m.
Dec. 10	St. Theresa's Circle 1:30 p.m.
	Knights of Columbus 6:00 p.m.
Dec. 11	Finance Council 5:30 p.m.
Dec 12	Bilingual School Mass
	Our Lady of Guadalupe 9:00 a.m.
Dec. 17	Stephen Ministry 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	Women's Group 11:30 a.m.
Dec. 21 & 22	Faith Formation Bake Sale
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Mass 3:30 & 6:00 p.m.
Dec. 25	Christmas Day Mass 9:00 a.m.
Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	St. Anne's Quilters
Jan. 4, 18	St. Joseph Men 8:00 a.m.
	WinGs 9:00 a.m.
Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26	Children's Liturgy of the Word
Jan. 7	Social Concerns 5:30 p.m.
	Stephen Ministry 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Finance Council 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 8, 22, 28	Confirmation Class
Jan. 14	St. Theresa's Circle 1:30 p.m.
	Knights of Columbus 6:00 p.m.
Jan. 15	Women's Group 11:30 a.m.
Jan. 16	Board of Ed 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Stephen Ministry 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 23	Parish Council 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	St. Roberts 1:30 p.m.
Jan 28	Stewardship 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	Faith Formation

After the Holy Mass, I was commissioned on October 6th with five other people, one man and four women. Their names are Mary Schutz, Mary Dongoski, Harry Fleegel, Jean Nelson, and Mary Fleegel. I was presented with a corsage, a book about St Francis, and a Tau cross. Then we celebrated with a roast beef dinner and an explanation by our sponsors as to why we became associates.

The Tau cross is a symbol of the crucifixion. St. Francis used it as a symbol of the cross. It is one of the principal symbols among Franciscans. It is also a symbol of ongoing conversion.

Becoming an associate in the Franciscan Order gives me a new dimension in my Christian walk. I'm included in their prayer life and they in mine. I will be going to special activities including retreats, days of reflection, and, of course, parties of all kinds at the mother house in Little Falls. I feel so much JOY exuded when I'm at the Franciscan Mother House.



San Pedro, Guatemala: The Village That Stole Our Hearts

“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought JOY to my soul.” Psalm 94:19



Belen and Rhonda

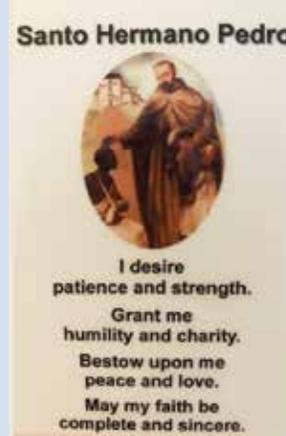
I talked many times on this trip about my anxiety with leaving the country, wondering what accommodations would be like, if my health and back would hold up, if there would be electricity for my CPAP machine. But I trusted God would see me through and not only did he do that, I witnessed divine intervention on many occasions.

It was raining every day before we arrived but stopped while we were there for the most part, and most importantly for the 1 year anniversary party, which was all organized outside. Dean and I were also part of the trip, which included 6th grade graduation of both our students we sponsor. No one was aware of that when the trip was planned. What a special moment to be there. There were so many other instances where we saw God’s hand directly guiding our journey and bringing such JOY to my soul.

– Rhonda Antrim Petersen

Something that stood out for me was the connection made between my nieces in Bloomington with the children in Guatemala. Before the trip, my sister-in-law had put together bags of her girls’ clothing (they are currently in 5th and 2nd grades) to bring down with me, but she asked me to pack it out of sight as there were some of my nieces’ old favorites and they might protest to see them given away. During the home visit, I learned the favorite animal of the Guatemalan girl I sponsor is giraffe; and that is also my eldest niece’s favorite animal. Sure enough, as I was going through my suitcase, there was a darling giraffe t-shirt, which I tucked in the backpack of my sponsored girl. When I told my niece about this upon my return, her smile was so bright to learn that the shirt that had been her favorite (“I wore it all the time!”) was now being worn by this Guatemalan child who has so little else materially, but also the same taste in favorite animals. Such mission trips help the world seem smaller and hearts more generous.

Another favorite memory and source of spiritual growth for me on this trip were our gatherings each morning to pray, and after dinner to process the day and pray again. Here is a picture of the prayer card we used to close these prayer times. One of these prayer cards also



Prayer Card

went into the backpacks of every child sponsored through the Children of St. Peter program.

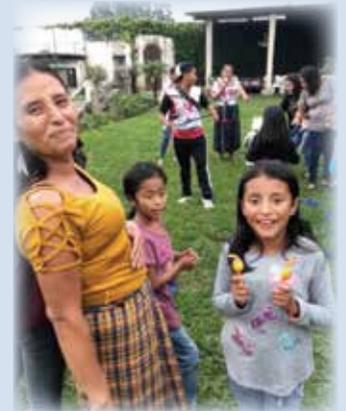
– Deb Forstner

The special moments for me were to be there for my child’s graduation and then be able to give a blessing to him and his sister. Then to find out that his mother needs surgery and to be able to give her a blessing and to let her know that I am praying. It reminded me that God calls us to be where He wants us to be so that we can build His kingdom.

I also enjoyed the reflection times. I particularly liked getting to know the others and to see how God was touching them.

– Deacon Dean Pawlowski

“May God Bless You” words from the mother of Karla the Kindergarten girl we sponsor. It was words from a very poor family



Mother and Daughter at the fiesta!



Excited to meet Cristel and saddened by the poverty. Beautiful family.

– Lindy Dewey





Gail Welle and her sponsored child

of six who have a lot less than most families of six in the U.S. It was words of appreciation after giving them beans, rice, maize and soup. Of the many great things we experienced, this would top the list.

HERE ARE A FEW OTHERS:

- A time of reflection throughout the five days to appreciate the many blessings God has gifted us.
- Visit the tomb of Hermando Pedro canonized a saint by St. John Paul II.
- Shopping for Guatemalan treasures in the Saturday Antigua Market.
- Attending mass in Spanish at a charming small country church in San Cristobol.
- Having Filiberto, who furnishes our OLV coffee, give us a tour of his two hectare coffee plantation on the slopes of the volcano Aqua where he also grows black beans.
- The Sunday afternoon fiesta for the 30 sponsored children and their families on the first anniversary of Children of St. Peter celebrating with games, cake, and piñatas.
- The opportunity to experience a small part of the Guatemalan culture.

"May God Bless You" to all the members of OLV who provided support through prayers, gifts, money, and encouragement.

- John and Meg Schmidt

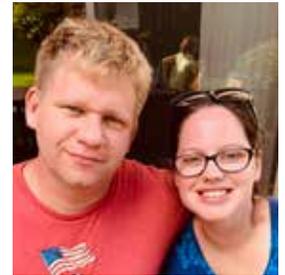


Mission

New Members

MICHAEL AND LAURA JONES

Michael and Laura Jones moved here from Duluth for an employment opportunity. Michael currently serves in the US Air Guard in Duluth. He was active duty Air Force for 15 years and now does weekends. Laura currently works for Tag-up here in Fergus Falls. She lived here 10 years ago before marrying Michael. She is originally from Thief River Falls. Their family has traveled all over the world. Their children, George (6) and Elizabeth (4) were born in Alaska near Fairbanks. They love being back in Minnesota and hope to make this their forever home. Welcome to OLV, Michael and Laura!



KENNETH TODD

Kenneth Todd moved to Fergus Falls in order to live near his daughter (Julie Dahl) and her family. His wife passed away in 2005. Kenneth has 5 children and 15 grandchildren. Welcome, Kenneth!

MOLLY AND NATHAN MAHLER

Molly and Nathan Mahler are the parents of three energetic boys, ages 4 years, 2 years and a baby born in August. They also have 2 dogs. Welcome to OLV!



ERIC PRICE

Eric Price moved to Fergus Falls from Salisbury, Maryland to take the position of executive director of the Fergus Falls Area YMCA. He is originally from Pennsylvania, where his mother and brother still live. Eric has a sister in Fergus Falls who is married with a little boy and girl. He was raised Catholic and is actively pursuing a deeper knowledge of his faith. Welcome to OLV, Eric!



FINDING ONE'S ROOTS IN IRELAND

In late August 2019 OLV parishioner Tom Hintgen and his wife, Sharon, traveled to Ireland with a tour group of 40 people, mostly from west central Minnesota.

One tour stop was in Killarney in southwest Ireland, close to where Tom's great-grandfather John O'Reardon McAuliffe once lived in the nearby village of Boherbue.

John served in the military from the early 1850s until the 1870s. It was in 1861 when John married Mary Catherine Williams. The couple had a large family, with nine children.

Their first child was born in Ireland. John then served with the Queen's Royal West Kent regiment in England, where the next three children were born.

The fifth child was born in eastern Canada. John was with the British Army until Canada gained its independence on July 1, 1867. He then became a teacher.

The McAuliffe family eventually made its way from eastern Canada to Dakota Territory. They farmed near Mapleton, southwest of Fargo, and in subsequent years operated a feed store in Fargo.

In Dakota Territory life for the McAuliffe family was hard. During winters in the 1880s, on the farm south of Mapleton, travel was only possible by horse and sleigh.

The final four children, including Tom's grandmother Nora, were born in Dakota Territory. North Dakota became a state in 1889.

Nora later married a French Canadian, Arthur Charest. One of their six children, Claire, married Roy Hintgen, Tom's parents.

Tom and Sharon, during their tour of Ireland, were reminded by the tour guide of reasons why people left Ireland in the mid-1800s.

Starvation caused by the potato famine forced close to 1.5 million people to emigrate from Ireland to seek a new life. In many areas of Ireland there also was political and religious persecution.

It doesn't appear that John and Mary McAuliffe left



John O'Reardon McAuliffe, great-grandfather of OLV parishioner Tom Hintgen, lived in Boherbue in the 1800s near Killarney in southwest Ireland. He later emigrated to Dakota Territory.

because of the famine. They departed from Ireland in the 1870s, about 20 years after the famine. It was likely they sought the economic opportunities offered by Canada and the Dakota Territory.

"John and Mary McAuliffe were parishioners in Fargo at the cathedral before it earned that status. John died in 1909 and Mary in 1916," said Tom's niece Bryna O'Sullivan, a genealogist and daughter of Tom's late sister, Mary. Bryna is self employed with Charter Oak Genealogy in Middletown, Connecticut, and is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists.

"A McAuliffe son, John, Jr., who served in the Spanish American War in 1898, is buried alongside his parents at Holy Cross Cemetery in north Fargo," she said.

MORE ABOUT THE VISIT TO IRELAND

Ireland, with a population of close to five million people, is 90 percent Catholic.

A surprise to tour members is that St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin is not a Catholic Church. St. Patrick's, originally Catholic, became an Anglican church in 1537 following the



Killarney, Ireland, is close to the same size in population as Fergus Falls.



The Blarney Castle and famous Blarney Stone, on the top of the castle, are located in southern Ireland.



The Cliffs of Moher are a famous attraction in western Ireland, near the Atlantic Ocean.

English Reformation. After Irish independence it became the Church of Ireland. Christ Church in Dublin, the other cathedral, also is the Protestant Church of Ireland. Both churches take pride in being the city's two medieval cathedrals.

Many places were amazing in Ireland. Not the least of these was Trinity College in Dublin, which has a library of seven million volumes and was built in the early 1700s. It was there where they viewed the Book of Kells, a ninth century manuscript that includes the four Gospels of the life of Jesus Christ.

The Book of Kells is one of the great treasures of Ireland. This is a beautiful and artistic manuscript that was hand illustrated by Celtic monks around 800 AD.

The tour group visited the Blarney Castle and famous Blarney Stone on the top of the castle. Legend has it that kissing the Blarney Stone gives a person the gift of persuasive speech.

In Killarney in southwest Ireland, close to the home area of Tom's great-grandfather, the group enjoyed horse-drawn carriage rides. Tom learned from a pharmacist in Killarney that his great-grandfather's hometown of

Boherbue is known for some special Irish music and dancing.

Cork is the largest city, close to Killarney, and the name of the county in this region of southern Ireland.

Visiting the Cliffs of Moher in western Ireland, near the Atlantic Ocean, was breathtaking.

Seeing a herding dog demonstration on a 400-acre Irish sheep farm was amazing. There currently are 31,500 sheep farmers in Ireland with a flock of 2.4 million ewes. The lowland sheep flock is the major source of lamb output.

Beef production also is a major contributor to the Irish economy. Major crops include wheat, oats and barley.

Guinness, a dark Irish dry stout (beer) is still the best-selling alcoholic drink in Ireland. Today Guinness also is exported and sold in more than 150 countries around the world.

Other Irish exports include pharmaceuticals, optical apparatus, perfumes, electrical machinery, aircraft products and honey. Ireland currently has a very strong economy.

Tom and Sharon found that the Irish people were exceptionally funny and enjoyable. They approach life with a "joie de vivre," (joy of life).

Another Fall Festival Success

"We would like to thank everyone for a fun and successful Fall Festival. So many generous people stepped forward to build our community by donating their time, talents, treasure and attend the celebration to demonstrate what being Catholic is all about. The individual chair people and all the generous volunteers made our job easy and enjoyable. Our Lady of Victory is our church family and we really enjoyed this family get-together. Our prayer is that our OLV family will do God's will on earth as it is in heaven." - David Schroeder

Dave and I felt SO VERY GRATEFUL to all of the sub-committee people. Dave and I had some big shoes to fill. Tony Heck has done such a great job of chairing this endeavor in the past.

From everything we can tell, it looks like we may have surpassed all previous years' dollar totals. This was only due to the amazing generosity of you as parishioners and friends.

Dave and I would love to hear any comments or suggestions you might have regarding the Fall Festival. We had several suggestions we were not able to implement this year. Please know we haven't lost track of them, we just didn't have time to put new processes in motion.

Thank you ALL, Scott Fritz



Volunteer from the Fall Festival



Cake Walk at the Fall Festival

SPECIAL NOTE:

I will be passing the torch to Deb Forstner, as Coordinator of the OLV newsletter in 2020. This has been a rewarding ministry. Thank you to Deb for her willingness to take over and a big thank you to all of the writers, photographers, and editors who have helped me along the way.

Any future ideas or submissions should be sent to: daforstner@gmail.com.

God Bless our OLV parish!

Rhonda Antrim Petersen

Church of OUR LADY OF VICTORY

207 North Vine Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

MASSES

Saturday 4:30 p.m.
Sunday 8:30 a.m.
Sunday 10:30 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Thursday 8:30 a.m.
(when there is 9:00 a.m. Mass)
Saturday 3:30 p.m.



Our Lady of Victory School (K-6th grade)
Learning Ladder Preschool (3-5 year olds, full and half day)
218/736-6661
www.ffolvschool.org

Reflections of an Old Man LESSONS

One learns a lot when faced with the loss of a leg and after spending nearly three months in a nursing home. I'll mention just three things I learned.

One is the deep sense of loss over seemingly little things. Things like never being able to swing a golf club again, or hop into the car to get a loaf of bread or pound of butter, or taking a long walk on the evening of the first gentle snowfall of winter, or being able to lector.

You may, of course, disagree, but I don't think it's possible to overestimate the importance of seemingly little things like that. They are, after all, just a few of the things that add interest, beauty, and meaning to life.

And that brings me to my second lesson: the new-found sense of humility resulting from a near-total dependence on others.

No one who knows me would ever describe me as having an excess of humility. Even I know it was never one of my stronger traits. But whatever pride I had in my 86 years of independence vanished in a hurry when I found myself needing help doing the simplest of things— things like getting in and out of bed; dressing and undressing; going to the bathroom; bathing; getting my coffee and meals; getting out of my wheelchair and into my recliner (and vice versa); providing the therapy I needed to gain the strength to finally go home, and a dozen or more "little" things that I was unable to do for myself, many of which I will always need help to do.

The third is a deeper understanding than ever of the phrase "God is love." I saw it in the actions and voices of the therapists, nurses, and aides, whose parting words were nearly always, "If you need anything else, just ring." I saw it in the outpouring of love and concern in cards and visits, some from my closest friends and others from people I hardly knew. I saw it in the sacrifices of time and effort from three of our sons in preparing our garage for a lift, our home for a wheelchair and walker, and my treasured '94 Olds for sale. Those efforts were nothing short of inspiring! I saw it in the regular phone calls of all four of our sons. And I saw it in the daily—usually twice daily—hour and often two hour visits from Margaret, who never let me down!

So does all I've said mean I'm happily resigned to my condition? By no means. Resigned, yes. But *happily* resigned? No! I'd much rather be the person I was four months ago.

So how do I reconcile the important lessons I've learned with the way I actually feel? Well I guess I have to be satisfied with a *fourth* lesson, one that's as real today as it was when I first learned it about 75 years ago...

...Thy will be done.

PS: Merry Christmas! Lee Krogh

www.ffolvchurch.org

Weekend Mass: Saturday, 4:30 p.m. Vigil | Sunday, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m.

Daily Mass: Tuesday, 12:05 p.m. | Thursday & Friday, 9:00 a.m.

Confession: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. | Saturday, 3:30 p.m.