

*Merry Christmas!*  
*Epiphany Sunday*  
*January 5, 2025*



**JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE**

## From the Gusset

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His Commandments and do what pleases Him. And His commandment is this: we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as He commanded us. Those who keep His Commandments remain in Him, and He in them, and the way we know that He remains in us is from the spirit He gave us.

(1John 3: 21-24)



I think the best thing that came out of **the pandemic** was our **practice** of making a **Spiritual Communion** for others. **The Church**, for thousands of years, **encouraged** us to make a **Spiritual Communion** for ourselves; whenever, we were unable to receive **the Eucharist**—that we would ask God to give us **the graces** of **the Sacrament**, so we could live our **vocations** for another week even though we were unable to **physically** receive **the Eucharist**. The US Bishops **encouraged** priests to pray **the Mass** and to make a **Spiritual Communion** for all of their **parishioners**. Even as we were coming out of **the pandemic** and the aged and those more susceptible to catching **the virus** were still unable to come to **Mass**—priests were **encouraged** to make a **Spiritual Communion** for many. In our **three parishes**, we adopted the **practice** of praying the **Spiritual Communion Prayer** for others just before we received **Holy Communion** ourselves. In a sense we were putting ourselves last and others first – the very **practice** that Christ **encouraged** us to do – to be **a servant** to others. You see, our Lord came to give His **life** as **a ransom** for many – to lay down His **life** that others might **Live**. When God the Father sees us **imitating** His Son, which is what we do when we ask God to give others **the graces** of **the Blessed Sacrament** – God is well pleased with us! God sends the Holy Spirit, who **remains** with us, and the Holy Spirit then prompts us to continue to believe in the name of Jesus Christ and to **love** others as the Christ **loved** others. I hope that the list of persons that you are making a **Spiritual Communion** for is growing **each week**. As your priest, I will continue to prompt you to make a **Spiritual Communion** for your **Spiritual Twelve** (those 12 special people in your life that you want to introduce our Lord to on the Resurrection day), for your **beloved dead**, for your spiritually adopted baby, who is in danger of abortion, and for our **10 Eucharistic Congress pilgrims**. On top of these people, I **encourage** you to add others: **the sick** of your family and friends, your co-workers and your boss, **elected government officials** both Catholic and non-Catholic, and even to make a **Spiritual Communion** for the people, who **sin** against you! As **St. John** tells us, if we keep God's Commandments and please God the Father by **loving** the name of His Son, Jesus,... if we **love** others enough to make a **Spiritual Communion** for them – than we can have **the confidence** that God will give **the graces** to others that we ask Him to; in which case, **the whole world** benefits from **our** going to **Mass** and receiving **the Blessed Sacrament** in a state of grace and making a **Spiritual Communion** for others!

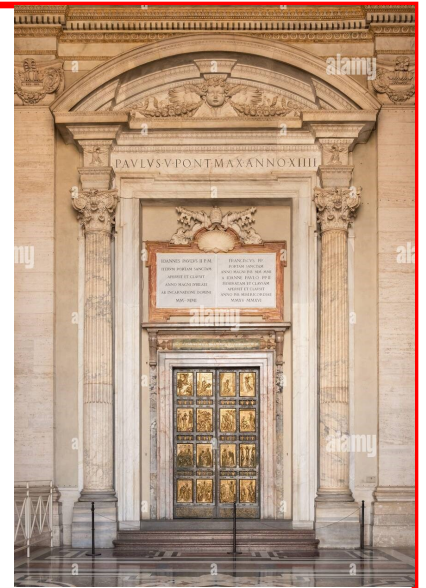
**Merry Christmas!**

**Yours on the Path**

**Fr. Randy**

# Jubilee Pilgrimage

The **Jubilee Year of 1950** was truly a year of **jubilation** as the **Catholic Church** had resisted the ravages of **Fascism**, **Nazism**, and **the second World War**, and **She** could reassure **Her** Faithful: “that the gates of hell had not been able to prevail upon Her.” After the horrific years of **hate** and **murder**, the destruction of entire cities and **the annihilation** of entire populations of people—the **Catholic Church** called for a year of **Reconciliation**—where former **enemies** would forgive each other and walk hand in hand through **the Holy Door**. A **new Holy Door** was built and installed for **the Jubilee**. The old doors were constructed of marble and dated from the **Pontificate of Benedict XIV** (1749) – the **new Doors** were constructed out of bronze and had 16 panels illustrating **the Theme** of **the Holy Year**: *the great return and the great pardon.*



*the great return and the great pardon.* Beginning with the expulsion of **Adam** and **Eve** from **the garden**, there are 15 scenes from the Old and the New Testament including **St. Peter's** great question, “*Lord, how often must I forgive my brother?*” The panels conclude with the opening of the **Holy Door** by **Pius XII**, himself. Just below the last scene are written the words from **the Book of Revelation**: “look, I am standing at the Door and knocking.” Though the seven **Holy Doors** throughout the **Rockford Diocese** will not be nearly as **ornate**, all the same blessings and **graces** can be obtained by walking through them! Yet as I walk through the grand **Holy Door** of **St. Peter's** in **Rome**, I encourage you to write the names of the people you love in my “**Prayer and Blessing Book**,” which I will hold in my hands as I walk through the **Holy Doors** in Italy, and place on **the altar** during my **Masses** on **the pilgrimage** in January. Just think, your **loved ones** will go with **Fr. Randy** on his pilgrimage in the **Jubilee Year 2025!**

# THE MASS AND THE SAINTS

**St. Albert the Great** asks us the question: *do we take pleasure in devoting ourselves to God in prayer and the sacrifice of His Son?* In other words, do you **delight** in talking to God directly **(in prayer)** and do you also find **great happiness** in talking to God the Father through His Son, Jesus (in **the Mass**)? In the ranking of **the senses** – the sense of **smell** is often in the last place; which is **ironic**, because it just might be that **the presence of God** is detected best by **smell**! Just think about it for a moment. Because our sense of **smell** is so weak in **comparison** to the other **senses** – we need something to be close by to **smell** it. This is not true for **sight** and **sound** – from a high vantage point, we can **see** something miles away and we can **hear** Church bells ringing from a great distance, but the other **three senses** need **near proximity** to function. Remember when **Isaac** pulled his son, **Jacob**, close to him that he might feel and **smell** his son, and **Isaac** also took from the hand of **Jacob** the bowl of **game meat**, which he ate. **Isaac** says, “Ah, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field that the Lord has blessed!” **The prayers** of the Son (are **the Mass**, the conversation of the Son to the Father) are **sweet smelling** to God the Father, and this is the reason **the Church** uses **incense** in **the Mass**. Notice that the **priest** always **incenses** completely, first **the altar** (which **represents** Christ), and then images of **the Saints (Icons, Statues,...)**, and then finally **the people** are **incensed**. **St. Thomas Aquinas** says, “that since **grace** passes to **the Faithful** through the work of Christ’s **ministers** that all must be **incensed** in order of their rank.” So, first the Christ, then His **Saints**, and then finally those, who are to one day become God’s **Saints** (us). I will never forget, **Fr. Striedl** asking me to pray a **Funeral Mass** for one of his parishioners. **Fr. Striedl** was going to attend **the Men’s Conference in DeKalb**, which he and his team have put together every year for all the **Catholic men** in the Midwest. So, after the **Funeral Mass**, I went to **the Conference** to help with **Confessions**, and **Fr. Striedl** said to me, “you **smell** like you have come from **Mass**!” **Father** smelled the **incense** that had **permeated** my clothes. Are people able to tell when you have been to **Mass**? Do people ever **smell incense** on you, and realize how **close** you have been to the God, who created **the Universe** – that God is inside of you, because you received Him in **Holy Communion**! **Incense** was used in **the Temple worship** of God in the Old Testament, but **the Church** still preserves the custom of using **incense**, because **incense** signifies something that must always exist and must always be renewed: that we take **pleasure** in the **closeness** of God to us in **the Holy Mass**!



No **Chicago Bear** football game ever held more participants than did **the Children’s Mass** on June 21, 1926 of **the Eucharistic Congress** in Chicago’s newly built stadium! More than **60,000 Catholic School children** sang in the choir alone, and estimates at the number of **Mass** attendees swelled to 500,000. **Soldier’s Field** will never sponsor an event with more **participants**.



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**Saturday, January 4th**

(+) Joseph & (+) Anna Mixa/ Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Mixa  
4:00 pm, **SMA** (+) Delbert Bonnell/ Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Klein &  
(+) Justin Corcoran/ Arlene Schmitt

**Sunday, January 5th Epiphany Sunday**

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy  
10:00 am, **OLPH** (+) Carol Bonnell/ St. Anne Sodality

**Monday, January 6th**

(+) Poor Souls in Purgatory/ Fr. Randy

**Tuesday, January 7th**

7:30 am, **SMA** (+) David Gorman/ Mr. & Mrs. Howard McInnis

**Wednesday, January 8th**

8:00 am, **OLPH** (+) Floyd Wilson/ Mr. & Mrs. Hugh McCoy

**Thursday, January 9th**

7:30 am, **SMA** (+) Gilbert Haub/ Fr. Randy

8:30 am, **OLPH** (+) Floyd Pry/ Family & (+) Patricia Baemer/ Mr. & Mrs. Don Dinges

**Friday, January 10th**

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Larry Leffelman/ Howardene Stewart

**Saturday, January 11th**

(+) Norbert Weber & (+) Patty Torman & (+) Leila Garland/ Fr. Randy

4:00 pm, **OLPH** (+) Gerald Leffelman & (+) Susan Ennenbach/ Sylvia Leffelman

5:30 pm, **SMA** (+) John Gehant/ Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Bresson

**Sunday, January 12th Baptism of the Lord**

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Marty Quest/ Velma Quest

10:30 am, **OLPH** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy



**Living Mass Intentions:**

**St. Patrick: Deacon Steve & Flo Jolly, Howardene Stewart**

**OLPH: Jerry & Pat Garland, OLPH choir, Nancy Neal**

**SMA: Pat & Char O'Conner, Sister Cornelia, Wanda Deacon**

**Epiphany Chalk Blessing**

Lord God of **Heaven** and **earth**, You revealed Your only begotten Son to every **nation** by the guidance of **a star**. Bless this **house** and all who inhabit it. Fill them with **the light** of Christ, that their concern for others may reflect Your **love**. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Write above the doorpost of your house and/or the lintel of each bedroom:*

**20 + C + M + B + 25**

May Christ Jesus **dwell with us**, keep us from **all harm**, and make us one in **mind** and **heart**, now and forever. Amen.