

# ST. MARY PARISH



*Ripples of God's love... Through our hearts, to all hearts*

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## BULLETIN REMINDER OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**Please call the office if you have any questions.**

### **This Weekend:**

- We are continuing to collect financial donations for those affected by the recent floods in Texas through Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. They are providing emergency financial assistance, counseling, funeral expenses, and other immediate needs. You can contribute online by visiting <https://ccaosa.org/flood-crisis-response/>. Additionally, you can place cash or a check in the collection box located at the back of the church or drop off your donation at the parish office. Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters during this difficult time.
- Be a part of the Habitat for Humanity Faith Build! Here are our scheduled dates and tasks: **Aug 6 - Build Walls (we still need 2 volunteers!)**, Prepare a Meal, Sept 2 - Siding, Oct 1 - Prepare a Meal, Oct 2 - Wall Rock, Oct 25 - Paint and Stain. To sign up for building activities, please contact Ray Fuchs at [rfuchs1944@gmail.com](mailto:rfuchs1944@gmail.com). If you're interested in preparing and/or serving meals, reach out to Sarah Fraley at [sfraley@new.rr.com](mailto:sfraley@new.rr.com).
- We are having a Pool Party! Join us on Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup> from 7 pm - 9 pm at the Mead Swimming Pool for outdoor games, snacks, and fun for everyone! All ages welcome—bring your swimsuits, towels, and smiles! There is no registration.
- On August 2 & 3, the Diocese of Green Bay will kick off the Raising Vocations Collection. This collection will support ministries that journey with young people to help them discover Christ and say “yes” to a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. Thank you for your prayer and support.
- Join us on Sunday for Coffee & Donuts after the 7:45 am and 9:45 am Masses.
- We will have Children’s Liturgy of the Word at the 9:45 am Mass on Sunday.

# in Joy & SORROW

ST MARY PARISH - APPLETON // 7.27.2025

WITH FR. BILL SWICHTENBERG



My pathway to ordination to the priesthood, some forty-three years ago, was not a straightaway, by any means. During my first year at UW-Madison in the fall of 1973, Francis Thompson's poem, *The Hound of Heaven*, resonated with me.

*I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
I hid from Him...*

My Dad, who was a faithful member of the United Church of Christ, pushed through the experience of marrying my Mom in the Catholic Church in 1953, at a time when the Church was so unwelcoming of people of Protestant faiths. Needless to say, Dad was not overjoyed when he heard of my plans to study for the priesthood. My Mom thought it best to remain neutral regarding the whole situation.

*Of my own mind;  
and in the mist of  
tears, I hid from  
Him...*

It was my Mom's Mother, my Grandmother, Susan, who prayed me into the priesthood. A woman of great faith, the Lord heard her prayers, which were fervent and heartfelt. Grandma has two grandsons who are priests, my cousin Fr John Griesbach in California and me in Wisconsin, and a great-grandson, Fr Seamus Griesbach, in Maine.

My grandmother and grandfather, William, were devoted members of Saint Mary Parish in Menasha. Grandpa directed the choir there and played the organ for some fifty years. He was extremely persuasive in enlisting his eight children, my Mom being the youngest, to sing in the choir. My uncles had to agree to join the choir if they were to have any chance of playing sports in Catholic grade and high school!

My roots stretch deep in the Catholic faith because of my heritage.

And not to forget my Dad's parents. Grandma May and Grandpa William were people of faith and dedicated to their Spiritual Family of the United Church of Christ in Neenah. As my Grandma, May, died before I was born, I grew up hearing how faithful she was.

This Sunday (7/27) marks the World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly. This day was the dream of Pope Francis, who instituted it in 2021. It is celebrated on the closest Sunday to the Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, the Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Grandparents of Jesus, which is observed on July 26.

Pope Francis was close to his Grandma Rosa, his father's mother. Francis treasured a note he received from his grandmother on the day of his priesthood ordination, December 13, 1969. It read: *May my grandchildren, to whom I have given the best of my heart, have a long and happy life. But if there are days of pain or illness, or if the loss of a loved one fills them with despair, may they remember that a whisper of a prayer and a look to Mary at the feet of the cross, can be like a drop of balsam on even the deepest and most painful wounds.*

On a lighter note, Grandma Rosa, often reminded her grandchildren that "the shroud has no pockets!" It does us good to remind ourselves that the constant urge to accumulate more and more things can be burdensome. And obviously, we "cannot take it with us!"

In Pope Leo's first message for this World Day of Prayer, he writes:

*God thus teaches us that, in God's eyes, old age is a time of blessing and grace, and that the elderly are, for God, the first witnesses of hope. Saint Augustine asks, "What do we mean by old age?" He tells us that God answers the question: "Let your strength fail, so that my strength may abide within you, and you can say with the Apostle, 'When I am weak, then I am strong.'"*

...

*The life of the Church and the world can only be understood in light of the passage of generations. Embracing the elderly helps us to understand that life is more than just the present moment, and should not be wasted in superficial encounters and fleeting relationships. Instead, life is constantly pointing us toward the future...If it is true that the weakness of the elderly needs the strength of the young, it is equally true that the inexperience of the young needs the witness of the elderly in order to build the future with wisdom. How often our grandparents have been for us examples of faith and devotion, civic virtue and social commitment, memory and perseverance amid trials! The precious legacy that they have handed down to us with hope and love will always be a source of gratitude and a summons to perseverance.*

...

*The Book of Sirach calls blessed those who have not lost hope (cf. 14:2). Perhaps, especially if our lives are long, we may be tempted to look not to the future but to the past. Yet, as Pope Francis wrote during his last hospitalization, “our bodies are weak, but even so, nothing can prevent us from loving, praying, giving ourselves, being there for one another, in faith, as shining signs of hope” (Angelus, 16 March 2025). We possess a freedom that no difficulty can rob us of: it is the freedom to love and to pray. Everyone, always, can love and pray.*

*Our affection for our loved ones – for the wife or husband with whom we have spent so much of our lives, for our children, for our grandchildren who brighten our days – does not fade when our strength wanes. Indeed, their own affection often revives our energy and brings us hope and comfort.*

If you would like to read Pope Leo’s entire message, here is the link:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/grandparents/documents/20250626-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html>

Thank you, dear Grandparents and Elders! Thanks for grounding our roots in holiness so that we can soar with wings which lift us up into a future filled with hope!

Saints Anne and Joachim, Grandparents of Jesus, pray for us! Pray with us!

*Fr. Bill +*