



Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

JANUARY 1, 2024

“MARY IS THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSION OF THE SON AND THE SPIRIT IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION, AND BECAUSE HIS SPIRIT HAD PREPARED HER, THE FATHER FOUND THE DWELLING PLACE WHERE HIS SON AND HIS SPIRIT COULD DWELL AMONG MEN.”
(REF CCC 721).

The solemnity of Mary is celebrated on the first day of the new year, and is considered a holy day of obligation honoring Mary as the Mother of God.

Following the birth of Christ, it is only fitting that we honor Mary as the Mother of Jesus. As Catholics, when we celebrate the solemnity of Mary Mother of God, we do not only honor

Mary, who was chosen from all of the women throughout history to bear God incarnate, but we also honor our Lord, who is both fully God and fully human at the same time.

This feast was created out of a desire to honor and recognize Mary's important role in salvation history, which inspired the creation of this feast. As it is known, Christians revere Mary as the mother

of Jesus and see her as a symbol of faith, purity, and devotion. The Blessed Virgin Mary had circumcised Him according to Levitical Law in accordance with the law of the 8th day after His birth, that is why she is celebrated on this day as the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. His place in the Christian faith is that He is seen as the Lord and the Son of God.



ST. VALENTINE

St. Valentine is the Patron Saint of Love, Lovers, Young People, Happy Marriages, Engaged Couples, Beekeepers and of Epilepsy. He was a priest in Rome during the reign of Emperor Claudius II, but St. Valentine was also a physician.

Claudius had a hard time recruiting an adequate number of soldiers for his army, which he accredited to men being hesitant to leave their wives and families behind. So, Claudius forbid marriages and engagements and indicated that all men should save their strength for the battlefield. Valentine was a strong believer in the protection and continuation of upholding the

importance of love and marriage; he ultimately gave his life to achieve this purpose. He defied the edict and continued to perform marriages. He was arrested, beaten and beheaded. He was executed on February 14, in about 269 A.D. this day is known as the Feast of Saint Valentine (St. Valentine's Day).

St. Valentine speaks immensely of the significance of commitment, that love is not something that you have today and can discard tomorrow. Love is lifelong and everlasting. Couples seek out St. Valentine for his blessing of commitment, consistency, patience, loyalty and to ensure that

they will stay together. Above all, they believe in the sacrament of matrimony.

Although St. Valentine was executed in Rome and buried there in the 3rd century, an Irish priest was granted permission to exhume his remains, and now his skeleton now lies under Whitefriar Church in Dublin, Ireland.

We celebrate St. Valentine yearly on February 14, by sending showing and sending love and affection to our loved ones. Valentine's Day cards, flowers and chocolates are given and received to honor and celebrate each other.

The Season of Lent

Lent is a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

Many know of the tradition of abstaining from

meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the season. Contemplate the meaning and origins of the Lenten fasting tradition. In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs."

In Lent, the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, a period of learning and discernment for individuals who have declared their desire to become Catholics.

New Year

The holidays are over and now we are entering a new year. Some of us are excited, some of us are fearful, some of us are grieving.....the list could go on and on. Life brings us so many different emotions and challenges but through all of them we are reminded that God is always with us. When we pray, He listens. As we move into the new year, I would like to share this with you.

"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Hoping that each and every one of you has a blessed, healthy and happy new year and that you are able to feel and experience God's peace.

Blessings,
Michelle



Easter

The word “Easter” comes from Old English, meaning simply the “East.” The sun which rises in the East, bringing light, warmth, and hope, is a symbol for the Christian of the rising Christ, who is the true Light of the world. The Paschal Candle used during the Easter Vigil is a central symbol of this divine light, which is Christ. It is kept near the ambo throughout Easter Time and lit for all liturgical celebrations.

The Easter Vigil is the “Mother of All Vigils” and Easter Sunday is the greatest of all Sundays. The season of Easter is the most important of all liturgical times, which Catholics celebrate as the Lord’s resurrection from the dead, culminating in his Ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. The octave of Easter comprises the eight days which stretch from the first to the second Sunday. It is a way of prolonging the joy of the initial day.

There are 50 days of Easter from the first Sunday to Pentecost. It is characterized, above all, by the joy of glorified life and the victory over death expressed most fully in the great resounding cry of the Christian: Alleluia! All faith flows from faith in the resurrection: “If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, is your faith.” (1 Cor 15:14)

STAFF HIGHLIGHT: JOE DOLES

A while back I was doing a project and had to gather the start dates for each staff member here at Holy Sepulchre. A few of my co-workers had interesting stories about their start here and I thought it would be nice to include that in the newsletter as part of getting to know us a little better. I chose to interview Joe Doles. As he sat in my office telling me his story, you could hear the pride in his voice and see the delight in his eyes, and after listening to it, I can see why. Thank you Joe for being willing to share your story with me and all those who read our newsletter. Thank you for your years of service and dedication to our mission.

When did you start at HSC? What was your job title at that time?

The first time I started was in 1992 and I was hired as a seasonal worker. I had taken an early retirement from Kodak and had already been interviewed by Jack Drexal before leaving Kodak. I had been photographing churches and helping with the cemetery’s mass programs from home with Mr. Voght for about a year before this. I was hired to be the Supervisor of the temp workers. This was the first year using temp workers, and after I was hired, it was discovered the outside temp agency didn’t want a cemetery employee in that position. So, I was put on the seasonal workers group. It was the hardest work I had done in 30 years. It was like putting in lawns by 6x10 ft sections. Even though it was tough, I enjoyed the

work and was asked to return the next year. In the meantime, I got a winter job at Worldwide News a downtown bookstore. I ended up staying there for 7 years before returning to Holy Sepulchre in 1999 as a part time gate attendant with my co-worker, Harry, who retired a few years later.

What is your current title?

Above Ground Memorialization Specialist.

What do you like best about your job?

Being able to keep all my daily work caught up and starting fresh the next day. Also, the pleasure I get when I have helped families with their photoceramics and they are appreciative of the work I’ve done for them. I never thought that at eighty I would still be here. I love the routine of having to get up early and have some place to go. I have always, in my adult life, had a breakfast diner to go to early in the morning. This got me out of the way of my children getting ready for school too.

Tell us a little more about you personally?

My wife and I have been sweethearts since junior high school in Hilton, NY. We went together for six years before being married in 1965. We have two sons, Scott, and Brian. We have always lived in the greater Rochester area within 20 miles of where we were born.

The Broken Chain

We little knew that morning,
God was going to call your name.
In life we loved your dearly,
In death we do the same.
It broke our hearts to lose you,
You did not go alone,
For part of us went with you,
the day God called you home.
You left us beautiful memories,
Your love is still our guide
And though we cannot see you,
You are always by our side.
Our family chain is broken
And nothing seems the same
But as God calls us one by one
The chain will link again.

MEET A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Mark D. Meeson
Licensed Funeral Director Since 2003.
Co-Owner of Vay-Schleich and
Meeson Funeral Home

Mark is fourth generation funeral director, following in the footsteps of both his grandfather, Kenneth Schleich and his father, Douglas Meeson.

He has been managing and working beside his family at Vay-Schleich and Meeson funeral home, for 20 years. The family funeral home was founded in 1927 and remains the areas largest local funeral provider in the Greece area due to their reputation and dedication to the local community.

From any early age, Mark can remember asking his dad to visit the Funeral Home. His family had made the funeral business part of their daily life. At a very young age, Mark took an interest in the family business. He remembers helping around the funeral home and really enjoyed not only spending time with his family, but also learning about the business.

Mark was inducted into the Town of Greece Youth Hall of Fame 1997 for exceptional service to our community. He graduated from The Aquinas Institute in 1997 and then attended Lynn University in Boca Raton Florida where he received his Associates Degree in Mortuary Science. After his residency, back in Rochester, he received his funeral directors license in 2003. Mark is a member of the National Funeral Directors Association, Member of the Erie-Niagara Funeral Directors Association and a member of the board with Falls Cemetery, Greece.

Mark has been married to Amy for 15 years and they have 4 children: Sophia, Jack, Matthew and Charlotte. Mark enjoys traveling, boating, classic



cars, landscaping, camping with his family, and the outdoors - especially the Thousand Islands.

Helping people at the most difficult time in their life is something Mark takes very seriously. Meeting with families and learning about their families, life stories and helping them celebrate a life lived is one of the things he really enjoys. He is passionate about providing comfort to those who put their trust in him.

Mark considers it an honor to work beside his family; as they help those families in need and support our community with what he was called to do in life. To Mark, it is not just a job but a vocation.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to families when they are experiencing loss. We appreciate all you do and for your service to our community.

UPCOMING DATES

MONDAY, JANUARY 1:

Offices closed in observance of New Year's Day. Our offices will reopen on Tuesday, January 2nd at 9:00 am.

MONDAY, JANUARY 15:

Offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Our offices will reopen on Tuesday, January 16th at 9:00 am.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20: January Mass of Remembrance (8:30 am). *Join us!*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17: February Mass of Remembrance (8:30 am). *Join us!*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19:

Offices closed in observance of President's Day. Our offices will reopen on Tuesday, February 20th at 9:00 am.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16:

March Mass of Remembrance (8:30 am). *Join us!*

For the most up-to-date information, please visit our calendar of events on our website and follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram. Sign up for our email list to learn all about our special events!

FEAST & HOLY DAYS

JANUARY 17: St. Anthony the Great - *Patron Saint of Grave Diggers*

JANUARY 21: St. Agnes - *Patron Saint of Girls, Betrothed Women and Gardeners*

FEBRUARY 14: Ash Wednesday- *Day of Repentance*

MARCH 17: St. Patrick - *Patron Saint of Ireland*

MARCH 19: St. Joseph - *Protector of Fathers, Artisans, Workingmen, among others.*

We offer locations dedicated to the Saints at both our locations. For more information, please email events@holysepulchre.org. We would be happy to help you locate a specific area dedicated to a Saint.

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HOLY
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CEMETERY

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GARDEN

ASCENSION GARDEN

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