



# Sacred Heart PTO News

January 2012

## Saints for the Month of January:

### January 3rd: Most Holy Name of Jesus

The letters IHS are an abbreviation of Jesus, the Greek name for Jesus. Although St. Paul might claim credit for promoting devotion to the Holy Name because Paul wrote in Philippians that God the Father gave Christ Jesus "that name that is above every name" (Phil 2:9), this devotion became popular because of 12th-century Cistercian monks and nuns but especially through the preaching of St. Bernardine of Siena, a 15th-century Franciscan. In 1530, Pope Clement V approved an Office of the Holy Name for the Franciscans. In 1721, Pope Innocent XIII extended this feast to the entire Church. Jesus died and rose for the sake of all people. No one can trademark or copyright Jesus' name. Jesus is the Son of God and son of Mary. Everything that exists was created in and through the Son of God (Colo. 1:15-20). The name of Jesus is debased if any Christian uses it as justification for berating non-Christians. Jesus reminds us that because we are all related to him we are, therefore, all related to one another.

### January 4th: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton: Patron Saint of Loss of Parents

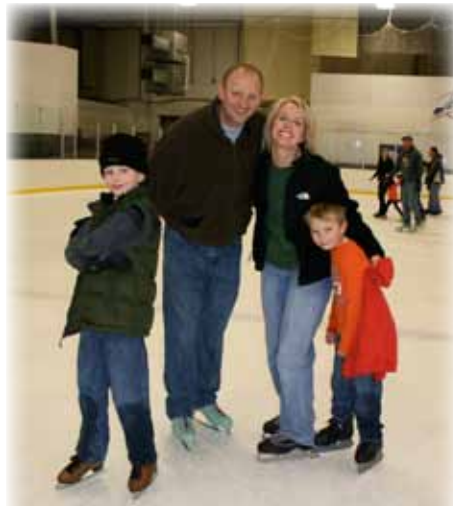
St. Elizabeth had two great devotions: abandonment to the will of God and an ardent love for the Blessed Sacrament. St. Elizabeth became Catholic in 1805 because of the Real Presence, devotion to the Blessed Mother and conviction that the Catholic Church led back to the apostles and to Christ. She then went on to found the first American religious community for women, the Sisters of Charity. She also opened the

*Welcome Back From the PTO presidents:*

**We hope you enjoyed many memorable moments with your families this Christmas season.** As you get back into the swing of things and make plans for this new semester, please mark your calendars for our next PTO meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 1st at 6:30 in the Church meeting rooms.

*Sacred Heart Takes Over KCIC:*

**Thank you to everyone who attended the Family Fun Night at Kansas City Ice Center.** We had a great turnout with about 253 skaters. It was great to see all the Sacred Heart families. Thank you for coming out!



*Important Dates:*

<b>MONDAY</b> <b>1/16</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b> <b>1/19</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>1/27</b>	<b>MONDAY</b> <b>1/30</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>2/1</b>
<b>No School</b> <b>MLK</b>	<b>Snacks for</b> <b>PTO Teacher</b> <b>Birthdays</b>	<b>No School</b>	<b>Catholic</b> <b>Schools</b> <b>Week</b>	<b>PTO Meeting</b> 6:30pm

first American parish school and established the first American Catholic orphanage. She did all of this after becoming a widow at age 30 while raising five children. She was the first American-born citizen to be beatified in 1963 and canonized in 1975.

## Defenders of Life: By: Charlene Mies

**As Catholics, the Church designates January as Respect Life month, where we draw attention to the lives of those in greatest need, those whose lives are weak and defenseless: the unborn, the elderly, the poor, and the oppressed.**

### January 5th: St. John Neumann

John Neumann was born in what is now the Czech Republic. After studying in Prague, he came to New York at 25 and was ordained a priest. He did missionary work in New York, Maryland, Virginia and Ohio. At 41, as bishop of Philadelphia, he organized the parochial school system into a diocesan one, increasing the number of pupils almost twentyfold within a short time. Gifted with outstanding organizing ability, he drew into the city many teaching communities of sisters and the Christian Brothers. Well-known for his holiness and learning, spiritual writing and preaching, on October 13, 1963, John Neumann became the first American bishop to be beatified. Canonized in 1977, he is buried in St. Peter the Apostle Church in Philadelphia. Neumann took seriously our Lord's words, "Go and teach all nations." From Christ he received his instructions and the power to carry them out. For Christ does not give a mission without supplying the means to accomplish it. The Father's gift in Christ to John Neumann was his exceptional organizing ability, which he used to spread the Good News. Today the Church is in dire need of men and women to continue in our times the teaching of the Good News. The obstacles and inconveniences are real and costly. Yet, when Christians approach Christ, he supplies the necessary talents to answer today's needs. The Spirit of Christ continues his work through the instrumentality of generous Christians.

**The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains to us why we are all called to respect life.** "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (CCC, 2258). The first four words in this paragraph resonate within me, "Human life is sacred." All life, from conception to its final stage, is to be respected. God has a special purpose for everyone that He grants life to. When we mess with life, we mess with God, our all-powerful and all-knowing Creator.

### If we believe in respecting life, then how do we live that out as informed Catholics?

It has only been within the last few years that I have actually taken action and made my voice heard. Previously, I kept my beliefs on these life issues private. I didn't want to project my opinions onto others, probably in fear of rejection, ridicule or not wanting to be considered offensive. But, I now know that is not what God asks of me. This respect for life also brings with it a responsibility for me to defend it. Proverbs 31:9 tells us, "Open your mouth, decree what is just, defend the needy and the poor." The defenseless need a voice and they need me and all of us to take action for their sake. It has taken me several years to become knowledgeable about the Catholic Church's beliefs about life matters, and I realize I have much more to learn. Now, when I speak about these issues, I no longer feel I am sharing "just my opinion" but the belief of what is right and just in the eyes of the Lord and our Catholic Church. That gives me great courage.

**How do we take action? What would that look like?** We can take action in many forms – sharing our respect of life with our politicians and asking them to support such legislation; being prayerful and including the intentions of the poor and defenseless; supporting agencies that respect the unborn child and the expecting mother (Wyandotte Pregnancy Center/Advice and Aid Clinic) and providing support to those who have suffered post-abortion (Project Rachel and Project Joseph); or becoming involved in our parish Respect Life Committee. This just names a few with a multitude of other avenues available.

**Perhaps you wish to know more about our Church's beliefs on these issues.** I learned the fundamentals by reading sections 2258-2283 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In preparing for this article, I came across a pamphlet from our Adoration Chapel which referenced *The Gospel of Life*, the encyclical letter written by Blessed Pope John Paul II in 1995. It is a gem and so beautifully written. I would highly recommend it. Even I, a lay person, could understand it!

**Sacred Heart parish will be celebrating the Gift of Human Life Mass on Saturday, January 14th at 9:00 a.m.** As a community of believers who respect life, this is one of the most powerful ways to make our voices heard – lifted in prayer to God, Our Father, at the Mass.

## Prayer of Intentions:

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1. For Fr. Craig, Mr. Antista, teachers, staff, and students that they may feel refreshed after the Christmas Break to begin a successful second half of the school year.
2. For those who may feel lonely during the winter months, may they find peace in the arms of Jesus.
3. For all the unborn children as we celebrate Right to Life Month this month, that our minds are enlightened to an awareness and to a renewed conviction that all human life is sacred because it is created in God's image and likeness.
4. For the Holy Father's general intention that the victims of natural disasters may receive the spiritual and material comfort they need to rebuild their lives.
5. For an increase in vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated religious life.

### January 7th: Blessed Angela of Foligno

Angela did not show marks of holiness in her early years. Born of a leading family in Foligno, Italy, she became immersed in the quest for wealth and social position. As a wife and mother, she continued this life of distraction. Around the age of 40 she recognized the emptiness of her life and sought God's help in the Sacrament of Penance. Selling most of her possessions, she entered the Secular Franciscan Order. She was alternately absorbed by meditating on the crucified Christ and by serving the poor of Foligno as a nurse and beggar for their needs. People who live in the United States today can understand Blessed Angela's temptation to increase her sense of self-worth by accumulating money, fame or power. Striving to possess more and more, she became more and more self-centered. When she realized she was priceless because she was created and loved by God, she became penitential and charitable to the poor. What had seemed foolish early in her life now became very important. The path of self-emptying she followed is the path all holy men and women must follow.

### January 17th: St. Anthony of Egypt

The life of Anthony will remind many people of St. Francis of Assisi. At 20, Anthony was so moved by the Gospel message, "Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor" (Mark 10:21b), that he actually did just that with his large inheritance. He is different from Francis in that most of Anthony's life was spent in solitude. He saw the world completely covered with snares, and gave the Church and the world the witness of solitary asceticism, great personal mortification and prayer. But no saint is antisocial, and Anthony drew many people to himself for spiritual healing and guidance. Anthony is associated in art with a T-shaped cross, a pig and a book. The pig and the cross are symbols of his valiant warfare with the devil—the cross his constant means of power over evil spirits, the pig a symbol of the devil himself. In an age that smiles at the notion of devils and angels, a person known for having power over evil spirits must at least make us pause. And in a day when people speak of life as a "rat race," one who devotes a whole life to solitude and prayer points to an essential of the Christian life in all ages. Anthony's hermit life reminds us of the absoluteness of our break with sin and the totality of our commitment to Christ. Even in God's good world, there is another world whose false values constantly tempt us.

### January 24th: St. Francis de Sales: Patron Saint of Authors, Deafness, Journalists and Writers

Francis was destined by his father to be a lawyer so that the young man could eventually take his elder's place as a senator from the province of Savoy in France. After receiving his doctorate, he returned home and, in due time, told his parents he wished to enter the priesthood. His father strongly opposed Francis in this, and only after much patient persuasiveness on the part of the gentle Francis did his father finally consent. Francis was ordained and elected provost of the Diocese of Geneva, then a center for the Calvinists. At 35 he became bishop of Geneva. While administering his diocese he continued to preach, hear confessions and catechize the children. His gentle character was a great asset in winning souls. He practiced his own axiom, "A spoonful of honey attracts more flies than a barrelful of vinegar." Francis de Sales took seriously the words of Christ, "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart." As he said himself, it took him 20 years to conquer his quick temper, but no one ever suspected he had such a problem, so overflowing with good nature and kindness was his usual manner of acting. His perennial meekness and sunny disposition won for him the title of "Gentleman Saint."

### January 28th: St. Thomas Aquinas: Patron Saint of Catholic Schools, Colleges, Schools & Students

By universal consent, Thomas Aquinas is the preeminent spokesman of the Catholic tradition of reason and of divine revelation. He is one of the great teachers of the medieval Catholic Church, honored with the titles Doctor of the Church and Angelic Doctor. His greatest contribution to the Catholic Church is his writings. The unity, harmony and continuity of faith and reason, of revealed and natural human knowledge, pervades his writings. One might expect Thomas, as a man of the gospel, to be an ardent defender of revealed truth. But he was broad enough, deep enough, to see the whole natural order as coming from God the Creator, and to see reason as a divine gift to be highly cherished. We can look to Thomas Aquinas as a towering example of Catholicism in the sense of broadness, universality and inclusiveness. We should be determined anew to exercise the divine gift of reason in us, our power to know, learn and understand. At the same time we should thank God for the gift of his revelation, especially in Jesus Christ.

I recall learning from a lesson during a Women's Bible study about the power of the Mass. In The Book of Joshua, the Israelites were in battle at Jericho. Instead of battling with armor and swords, they battled with their prayers and worship. They were instructed to carry the ark of the covenant which contained a written copy of the Ten Commandments, the staff of Aaron, and manna. This ark was a sign to the people of Israel that God was with them. With the ark of the covenant proceeding them, the Lord instructed them to march around the city walls for seven days. On the seventh day, the walls of Jericho fell and the Israelites overtook the city. Jericho was a fortified city that should have been invincible but no city walls could withstand the power of God. Worship determined the history of the Israelites. What made their worship so powerful? It was the presence of God (the ark of the covenant). Our worship can determine our history, too – our worship at the Mass. We have been given that same powerful presence, the presence of Jesus within the Eucharist. The Mass is our battle field against evil. This is where we bring our individual battles and those global battles, such as these life issues, in the presence of Jesus, the heavenly saints and angels and the faithfully departed. Such is the power of the Mass!

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### Blessed Pope John Paul II leaves these magnificent words of encouragement to us, the faithful -

***"To all the members of the Church, the people of life and for life, I make this most urgent appeal, that together we may offer this world of ours new signs of hope, and work to ensure that justice and solidarity will increase and that a new culture of human life will be affirmed, for the building of an authentic civilization of truth and love."***

*(The Gospel of Life, no. 6)*

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**We are the people of life and for life.** God is calling on us to be His defenders of life. May He shower each of us with the graces needed to bring about a new era which respects the dignity of every life, from conception to end.

### Right to Life Prayer

*Lord and giver of all life, help us to value each person created in love by You. In Your mercy, guide and assist our efforts to promote dignity and value of all human life, born and unborn. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.*

