

# ST. MARY PARISH



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

312 SOUTH STATE STREET • APPLETON, WI 54911

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## BULLETIN REMINDER OF UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Bishop's Appeal - St. Mary has remained at 94%. We are \$3,985 from reaching the annual goal.

We want to celebrate our high school graduates of 2025! Graduates - if you do not receive an email with details this week and want to participate, please reach out to Tracy at [tturba@stmaryparish.org](mailto:tturba@stmaryparish.org).

Reminder-The parish office hours are Monday-Thursday from 9 am-4 pm. If you have parish business after hours, please contact Kristina at the parish office by phone during business hours or by email. [kresterhouse@stmaryparish.org](mailto:kresterhouse@stmaryparish.org)

We need volunteers to help with Coffee & Donuts this summer. If you can help, please click the following link to check out the summer dates. [COFFEE&DONUTS](#)

6/16 St. Mary Grief Support Program beginning June 16 and will meet for 8 weeks. Registration is required. Please call the office for details.

6/7&8 St. Joseph Food Program is collecting anything pasta or things that go with pasta, such as sauces or canned meats or veggies, etc. Please no glass containers, past used by dates or anything perishable. Thank you for helping others.

6/14 10am-12 Young couples and young families, remember to register for the park picnic. There will be games, snacks, and plenty of time to connect and build friendships together. For more details and to RSVP go to <https://bit.ly/familypicnic2025>

# in Joy & SORROW

ST MARY PARISH - APPLETON // 5.31.2025

WITH FR. BILL SWICHTENBERG



## LETTER TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2025

### **Congratulations, dear young women and men!**

It will do you good to pause to reflect on this milestone in your life. You have every reason to be proud of all that you have accomplished. This is the good kind of pride which is grounded in the realization of your dignity as a human being, created in the image and likeness of God. And all that you achieve is through Jesus, with Jesus, and in Jesus, and is for the good of others. Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta said often that the most joyful people are those who serve others. I am counting on you, as are so many others among your family and friends, to make a difference for good wherever you are.

It will do you good also to overflow with gratitude to all who have loved you and affirmed you along the way, especially your parents

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the good of others.*

and grandparents, your brothers and sisters, your friends, your teachers and coaches. Don't let these holy days pass by without reaching out to them with your loving gratitude!

We are living in a deeply chaotic and polarized moment in the history of our Church, our nation, and our world. The values which define us as good persons are being undermined. Key to all of this is to be a voice for all that is true, beautiful, right, and just. The times we live in demand that we find our voice and our witness as we walk the path that affirms the dignity of every person, that affirms that all are included in the heart of the Lord, and that affirms the diversity among us as a precious gift that makes unity beautiful.

The great civil rights activist, Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, often declared, "Speak up, speak out, get in the way. Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America."

My friends, it will take great courage on your part to stand on the side of Jesus as a strong voice for the values of sacrificial love, forgiveness, truth, peace, and justice that Jesus lived and breathed in his every word and action.

Here is where Pope Leo XIV's realism is apparent. In his homily at the Mass with the Cardinals on the day after his election, the Holy Father commiserated, *"Even today, there are many settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd, meant for the weak and unintelligent. Settings where other securities are preferred, like technology, money, success, power, or pleasure. These are contexts where it is not easy to preach the Gospel and bear witness to its truth, where believers are mocked, opposed, despised or at best tolerated and pitied. Yet, precisely for this reason, they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed. A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family and so many other wounds that afflict our society. Today, too, there are many settings in which Jesus, although appreciated as a man, is reduced to a kind of charismatic leader or superman. This is true not only among non-believers but also among many baptized Christians, who thus end up living, at this level, in a state of practical atheism. This is the world that has been entrusted to us, a world in which, as Pope Francis taught us so many times, we are called to bear witness to our joyful faith in Jesus the Savior. Therefore, it is essential that we too repeat, with Peter: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Mt 16:16). It is essential to do this, first of all, in our personal relationship with the Lord, in our commitment to a daily journey of conversion. Then, to do so as a Church, experiencing together our fidelity to the Lord and bringing the Good News to all (cf. Lumen Gentium, 1)."*

These are our lifelines and the key to a joy-filled life charged with purpose:

- To walk closely with the Lord, your friend and mine,
- to rely on Him in both good and bad times, happy and sad times, and healthy and sick times,
- to stay connected to His Church, the People of God,
- to make your Bible your traveling companion on your life's journey, wherever you find yourself, and to dedicate some time for the Lord, to be absorbed in prayer, every day,
- to celebrate the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation often, filled with trust in the Lord's closeness to you,
- to see Jesus in those around you or far away from you, especially in the poor who cry out, and even in the earth, our common home, which cries out with our poor sisters and brothers.

More pointedly, how will you find it in yourself to be a peacemaker, to do all that you can to bring people together? How will you help to build a longer table instead of a higher fence?

Words matter, even if actions may speak more loudly. In terms of my speaking, I ask myself these three questions, attributed, by some, to Socrates: Is it necessary? Is it true? Is it kind?

Let me leave you with this poem titled **Small Kindnesses** by Danusha Lemeris.

*I've been thinking about the way, when you walk  
down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs  
to let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you"  
when someone sneezes, a leftover  
from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying.  
And sometimes, when you spill lemons  
from your grocery bag, someone else will help you  
pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other.  
We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot,  
and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile  
at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress  
to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder,  
and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass.  
We have so little of each other, now. So far  
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.  
What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these  
fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here,  
have my seat," "Go ahead—you first," "I like your hat."*

Be kind, graduates! Jesus is so proud of you and is relying on you to go and make a difference in His Name! You will get a ditto on that from me!

Godspeed!