

January 2024

*Happy New Year*

tcpm.prayers@gmail.com



## *From Father Stan Sledz...*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I'm finally on time with 4 hours to go!! ...to wish you a Blessed New Year/Prospero Nuevo Anno and to be inspired and send this monthly message! 😊❤️😊

Our Tradition has still a few Seasonal holy days; Epiphany is a big one. It translates as "the Appearance of God" (from the Greek language). It alludes to the Revelations announcing (in faith) that "Jesus is God."

First, by the visit of the Magi - guided by a star to non-Jews (in more than one way.) How could the star beam illuminate one home? Another observation: Joseph, Mary and Jesus were in a home - so some time after the birth in a stable.

Then the announcement by the Father at the Baptism of Jesus, that Jesus was God's Son.

Then the first miracle; the multiplication of wine at the wedding in Cana.

Also, on January 1, the Motherhood of Mary. But added that her Son was God, thus the title of the Mother of God (believing two things, that Mary was a Virgin but the Mother of Jesus AND this child was God (becoming human)!

I CAN'T PROVE ANY OF THIS TO YOU! It's what our church believes, by faith and by combining certain Revelations. It's what we believe together with the Orthodox Christians.

It's also our celebration of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr, this month. He was graced to dedicate his life to awakening us to the sacredness of ALL PEOPLE! He became a martyr!

Then we get into Ordinary Time, but not in the usual sense. It's just not the season of Christmas or Easter with Advent and Lent as preparation times. But there are still seasons of the Octaves (8 days) and extensions of the major feasts!

But TODAY is New Year's Day, not a holy day, but we can make it so - through prayer. In fact EVERY DAY!

Each day of the year is Graced, for us, to be reminded by God that we are forgiven through God's Love! 😊💙

Father Stan

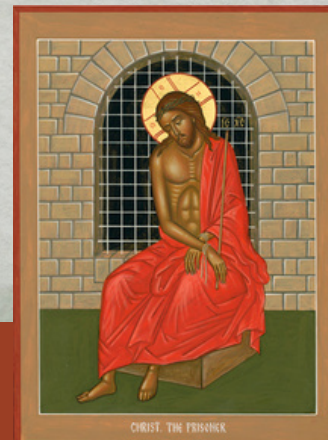


Christians are asked to see Jesus in the face of everyone, including both victims and offenders.

## HEBREWS 10:24-25

We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works.

We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near.



**"I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Matthew 25:36**

**"LET'S THINK OF OUR INCARCERATED BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND LET'S THINK ABOUT THE TENDERNESS OF GOD FOR THEM AND PRAY FOR THEM SO THAT THEY MAY FIND IN THAT WINDOW OF HOPE A WAY OUT TOWARD A BETTER LIFE." -POPE FRANCIS**



**For the first time since pre-Covid, Charis will be going inside MCF-Shakopee for an abbreviated retreat. We will be there from 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 19, 2024.**

**Even though our normal retreat is three days, we are grateful for this opportunity. Please pray for the 60+ women who have registered for the retreat, the volunteers, and the staff.**

**Thank you!!**



## **JANUARY PEN PAL UPDATE**

### **HAPPY NEW YEAR**

to all Pen Pals Volunteers!

It's that time of year when people are buzzing about resolutions and fresh starts. The pen pal ministry strives to increase the number of pen pal matches each year, and we are excited about the potential for growth in 2024! And you can help! Consider inviting a friend or family member to send in a pen pal volunteer application. Gather a group of parishioners at your church to fill out applications and support one another as you grow in relationship with those who are in prison. Personal stories are the most effective way to recruit new pen pals, and we know you've got some great testimonies to share.

Need more information? Contact me at [tcpm.penpal@gmail.com](mailto:tcpm.penpal@gmail.com).

Blessings on all of you as you enter 2024.

*-Emily*

## REFLECTIONS FROM THIS YEAR'S ANGEL TREE PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

The Angel Tree program is organized through Prison Fellowship. It connects parents in prison with their children through the delivery of Christmas gifts on their behalf. In most cases, local church volunteers purchase and deliver gifts to children in the name of their incarcerated parent. The cost of an Angel Tree Christmas is about \$25 per child. Included with the children's information, Prison Fellowship provides a suggested gift type based on what the prisoner picked out using their gift guide. You will confirm with the child's caregiver that this would be a good gift for the child.



**This past Christmas, through a private donor and with the assistance of the churches of St. Bridget, St. Peter Claver, and St. Joseph, we were able to help 34 families in North Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Rosemount. Because of that donor, not only were we able to provide gifts for the children, but each family also received a \$200 gift card.**

One in 49 children in the U.S. has a mom or dad in prison. You can help children know they are loved by their parents and by Jesus! The Angel Tree Ministry began in 1982 and they provide excellent support and resources to conduct this ministry. Read more at [prisonfellowship.org/about/angel-tree/](https://prisonfellowship.org/about/angel-tree/) and find out how your parish can help bring happiness and hope to the children and families of the incarcerated.

## PRAYER REQUESTS FROM INSIDERS



"Please pray for my family, especially my fiance, Jodi, in this holiday, Christ's birth season. Pray for God's love and mercy to surround them, through Jesus Christ. God Bless all." - Jon

"For my wife Christina as she settles into a new home. For her and her family to have a peaceful Christmas. For my mom Julie celebrating Christmas away from her family." - Neil

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE RESTORE ACT OF 2023?

The RESTORE Act, championed by Reps. Steve Cohen (D-TN), John Rutherford (R-FL), and Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Raphael Warnock (D-GA,) would repeal the lifetime federal ban on individuals with felony drug convictions from receiving SNAP. It would allow them to apply for the program before their release so that they can meet their basic needs on day one, reducing the likelihood of recidivism and increasing the quality of life for people hoping to reintegrate into their communities.

Many people face poverty and food insecurity following release from incarceration. By denying help with food, the lifetime SNAP ban is counterproductive to successful reentry and efforts to reduce recidivism. It also disproportionately harms women and people of color, who are statistically more likely to be convicted of a felony drug violation.

The lifetime SNAP ban also prevents returning individuals from benefiting from the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program. This program provides job and vocational training opportunities that can help prevent recidivism and support effective reentry.

This bipartisan bill was introduced into Congress on May 18, 2023. A letter to Congress from the USCCB and other Catholic Prison Ministry and Restorative Justice committees followed on June 9, 2023. This bill is in the first stage of the legislative process. It will typically be considered by committee next before it is possibly sent on to the House or Senate as a whole.