

ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

508 W. ANGUS STREET

GRETNA, NE 68028



THE HOLY FAMILY

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom;
and the favor of God was upon him. - Lk 2:40

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD. ©LPI

DECEMBER 31, 2023



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH
Gretna, Nebraska

Welcome

We invite you to become involved
in our parish community!

There are many opportunities for
experiencing the peace and joy of our loving
God in liturgy, education, prayer and service.

If you would like to join our parish
family, please visit our website or
the Parish Office for a registration form.

PARISH OFFICE

Office Hours.....M-F 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Phone.....402-332-4444
Fax.....402-332-5107
Website.....stpatricksgretna.org
Facebook & Instagram.....@stpatgretnane
YouTube.....@StPatrickCatholicChurchNE
E-mail.....stpatrick.gre@archomaha.org
Flocknote.....text STPATGRETN to 84576

MASS AND HOLY EUCHARIST

Saturday.....5:00 PM
Sunday.....8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, & Noon
Monday.....No Mass or Communion Service
Tuesday.....6:00 PM
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.....7:30 AM
Holy Days.....7:30 AM & 6:00 PM
Holidays (on weekdays)9:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday.....4:00 PM - 4:40 PM
Or call the parish office for an appointment.

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Parishioners registered for a minimum of one
year are eligible to marry here. Six months of
marriage preparation prior to your wedding is
required by the Archdiocese. Contact the Parish
Office to schedule a wedding date and marriage
preparation instruction.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptisms take place on the first and third Sundays
of each month after the Noon Mass. A baptismal
date will not be set until you become a registered
parishioner and both the parents and Godparents
attend the baptismal class for their first child.
Classes are held at 7 PM on the second Monday
of each month in the Fr. Hitch Room. Please call
the Parish Office if you will be attending the class.

MINISTRY TO THE SICK

If you, a relative or friend are hospitalized or shut
in, short or long term, and would like a visit from
the Pastor, Deacon or Pastoral Minister, please
call the Parish Office. For emergencies or if facing
danger or death, call 402-332-4428.

PERPETUAL EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Access the Adoration Chapel through the Church
from 6 AM to 7 PM or contact the office for an
access card to the back door. To sign up for an
hour, contact Jean Hlavacek at 402-504-4222.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

FIRST READING (SIR 3:2-6, 12-14 OR GN 15:1-6; 21:1-3)

Abraham and Sarah relied on their faith in the Lord as they struggled with family matters.
When have you needed to rely on faith when it comes to your family?

SECOND READING (COL 3:12-21 OR 3:12-17 OR HEB 11:8, 11-12, 17-19)

Hebrews teaches us that at every challenge in his life, Abraham consistently trusted and
obeyed God. When have you had to surrender complete trust to God?

GOSPEL (LK 2:22-40 OR 2:22, 39-40)

In their purification ritual in the Jerusalem Temple, Mary and Joseph learn news from
Simeon and Anna about their newborn baby, Jesus. In your family, how do you deal with
startling or unsettling news?

GOSPEL MEDITATION



I remember the first time my older sister asked me if I wanted
to hold her newborn son. Terrified, I told her I didn't think it
was a good idea. My résumé had nothing to suggest I would
be a qualified baby holder. But she warmly told me, "I'll help
you hold him." It struck me that she is baby's mother. She is
the one who decides who is qualified to hold him. I took him
in my arms and soon I began to feel comfortable with that
tiny little warm cooing creature in my arms, and soon I no
longer feared holding him. Now, twenty-seven nieces and
nephews later, holding a newborn child is one of the great
joys of my life.

Do we sometimes think that Jesus is given only to the highly qualified, special religious
people? In the Gospel of Luke today we hear about the presentation of the Lord in the
temple. The newborn son of God is passed around like a baton in a relay race, not guarded
like a precious jewel or a breakable china dish. We can see Him going from the arms of
Mary to Joseph, then to the priest performing the ceremony, then to Simeon the old man,
then to Anna the old widow. Each one receiving Him and then handing Him to the next. A
tidal wave of joy and thanksgiving follows wherever He is placed.

Believe me, you are qualified to hold Jesus in your arms. How can I say that with such
confidence? Because the mother decides who is qualified. The Blessed Virgin, embodied in
the Church, holds Him out to you and me. She rejoices to place Him in our arms to hold,
and to hand Him on, too.

CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED

QUESTION:

What are the servant songs of Isaiah? How do they relate to
Jesus' life and ministry?

ANSWER:

The four servant songs (Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, and 52:13
—53:12) are strategically placed in Second Isaiah to offer hope
and consolation to a suffering Israel during its Babylonian Exile.

Israel had been defeated by the Babylonians, who destroyed
their temple, killed the last of the kings in David's lineage,
exiled them from their land, and transported them to Babylon. This is the context in which
Second Isaiah composes his powerfully poetic book of hope and consolation. A significant
part of that message is the portrait of God's servant, who is called to be a source of hope
and encouragement for the people.

Each of the four poems emphasizes God's choice and election of the servant. The last poem
stresses the suffering and rejection of God's servant, along with his eventual death. Isaiah
is certain that God will use the servant's innocent suffering as a way to redeem and remove
the guilt and sin of others. Thus, the servant becomes a source of salvation for himself and
for others.

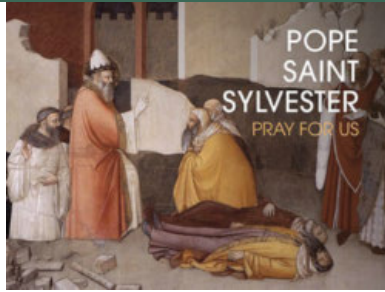
Who is this servant? Many suggest that Isaiah was referring to Israel herself, as she
underwent illicit suffering which would ultimately prove to be redemptive. Jesus'
followers, including those for whom Mark wrote his Gospel, understood Jesus' ministry in
terms of Isaiah's suffering servant whose innocent suffering and death became the means
of salvation for all.



ST. SYLVESTER

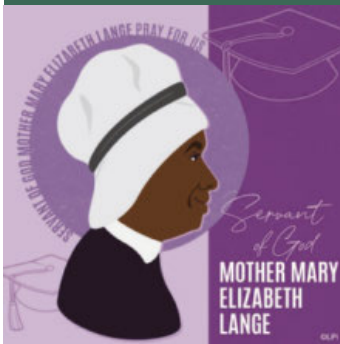
Pope

Pope St. Sylvester (c. 250-335 A.D.) was born in Rome and raised as a Christian under the care of pious parents, and the religious instruction of a devout priest. He was later ordained to Holy Orders in Rome, and witnessed the outbreak of Christian persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. During this time he became well-known as a good and holy priest, so much so that when the Pope died, Sylvester was appointed the new Bishop of Rome. Little is known about Pope St. Sylvester other than the many important events in Church history that occurred under his pontificate. He was the reigning pope during the Council of Nicea which condemned the Arian heresy and established the Nicene Creed; he was the Holy Father who converted and baptized the Roman Emperor Constantine; Rome's greatest churches were built under his direction by Constantine, including St. John Lateran, St. Peter's, and Santa Croce; and the Church saw the beginnings of temporal prosperity and the establishment of the Christian Roman Empire. Sylvester was Pope from 314 A.D. until his death in 335 A.D. His feast day is December 31.



SERVANT OF GOD MOTHER MARY ELIZABETH LANGE

Religious



Elizabeth Clarisse Lange's early life is not well documented. She was born between 1783 and 1794, some sources claim her birthplace as San Domingo, Hispaniola, others suggest Santiago de Cuba. One story relates that her mother was the daughter of a Jewish plantation owner, and her father was enslaved on the property. Most agree, however that she grew up in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, and received an excellent Catholic education, her family one of some means. Eventually, Lange immigrated to the United States as a free person and ended up in Baltimore, Maryland in 1813. In Baltimore at the time, free people of color outnumbered those who were enslaved and there was

an established community of other French-speaking, Catholic, Afro-Caribbean refugees from the Haitian Revolution. Despite her education and means, as a black woman in a society marked by slavery and racism, she faced numerous obstacles in pursuing her vocation. In the early 1800s, there were few opportunities for black women to receive the proper education or training specifically needed to enter into religious life. Nonetheless, Lange persevered in pursuit of her calling, and once in Baltimore, she became involved with the growing community of black Catholics in the city. Lange began working as a teacher and catechist, helping to educate and evangelize the city's black population. There was an incredible need for education for black children at the time because they were not permitted in Baltimore's public school system, so Lange opened a free school to serve youth of color inside of her home. During this time, Lange met Fr. James Nicholas Joubert, a French priest who shared her vision of establishing a congregation of black sisters. Together, Lange and Joubert worked to lay the foundations for what would become the Oblate Sisters of Providence—the first black religious congregation in the United States. In 1829, Lange and three other women made a private commitment to live a religious life under Joubert's guidance. The following year, they formally established the Oblate Sisters of Providence, taking vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Lange served as the congregation's first superior, overseeing its growth and development over the next several decades—becoming the first-ever black superior general in the Americas. She took on the name Sister Mary. The Oblate Sisters of Providence faced many challenges in their early years, both from within and from outside of the Church. As a congregation of black women, they were subject to discrimination and prejudice, including from some of their fellow Catholics. Nonetheless, the sisters persevered in their mission to serve God and their community by opening schools and orphanages as well as providing spiritual and material assistance to those in need. Lange herself was known for her deep spirituality, her tireless work ethic, and her compassion. Her example inspired many other women of color to consider religious life and the Oblate Sisters of Providence grew to become a thriving congregation with a strong sense of mission and purpose. Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange died on February 3, 1882, at the age of 88. She was declared Venerable on June 22, 2023, and she is remembered as a trailblazer, a visionary, and a woman whose faith and perseverance helped to break down barriers and create new opportunities for black Catholics in the United States.



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH Gretna, Nebraska

READINGS THIS WEEK

MONDAY: Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 (2a)/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

TUESDAY: 1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/Jn 1:19-28

WEDNESDAY: 1 Jn 2:29—3:6/Ps 98:1, 3cd-4, 5-6/Jn 1:29-34

THURSDAY: 1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98:1, 7-8, 9/Jn 1:35-42

FRIDAY: 1 Jn 3:11-21/Ps 100:1b-2, 3, 4, 5/Jn 1:43-51

SATURDAY: 1 Jn 5:5-13/Ps 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20/Mk 1:7-11 or Lk 3:23-38 or 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38

NEXT SUNDAY: Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 (see 11)/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12



OBSERVANCES THIS WEEK

MONDAY: Mary, The Holy Mother of God, New Year's Day, World Day of Peace

TUESDAY: Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church

WEDNESDAY: The Most Holy Name of Jesus

THURSDAY: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

FRIDAY: St. John Neumann, Bishop

SATURDAY: St. André Bessette, Religious

NEXT SUNDAY: The Epiphany of the Lord





ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH
Gretna, Nebraska

Read the Good News: the Catholic Voice

Stay up to date by reading the stories
from around the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Spread the word and scan the QR code
with your smartphone camera.



catholicvoiceomaha.com

NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS Not a Holy Day of Obligation



Monday,
January 1—the
Solemnity of
Mary, the Holy
Mother of
God—is not a

Holy Day of Obligation this year, however we will
have a 7:30 AM Mass on that Monday. The parish
office will be closed on Monday, January 1.

SEMINARIAN PRAYER CORNER

Please pray for our
Seminarians as they
prepare for God's holy
priesthood.

This week let us pray
for **Will Targy**
(Theology III at
Kenrick-Glennon
Seminary) from St.
Mary's in Bellevue.

"I am a shield to you;
Your reward shall be
very great." If you feel God is offering you the gift of
a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life as a
sister, brother, or consecrated virgin, talk to your
priest or reach out to Father Scott Schilmoeller at
402-558-3100 or email vocations@archomaha.org.

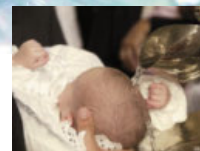


"PRAY ALWAYS AND DO NOT LOSE HEART."

 Pray for our Seminarians



Since our last update on December 24, one child has been baptized
into the Body of Christ. We congratulate the parents and family
members, and we welcome your little one into the Family of Faith!
We are praying our Lord Jesus will bless, guide and inspire each of
you in His love as you travel along your faith journey. Congratulations!



Name.....Date

Lauren Hailee Lane.....12/23/2023

FR. SSONKO MISSIONARY FUND MATCH DONATIONS Beginning Construction on a Kitchen for St. Mary's School



Fr. Ssonko has received some exciting news! A friend
of the Father Ssonko Missionary Fund outreach has
offered to match donations up to \$5000 in order to
begin construction of the kitchen at St. Mary's
Primary School in Busaabala, Uganda.

Learn more about Father Ssonko's important work
and ministry on behalf of the children served by St.
Mary's Primary School in Busaabala, Uganda at
stpatricksgretna.org. On the website you will see that

the #1 Immediate Need includes a Kitchen.

Donations in any amount made between now and January 8 will be applied to this \$5000
match. Essentially each gift will be doubled; your \$10 = \$20, your \$50 = \$100, your \$1000 =
\$2000 until the match total of \$5000 is reached. Meeting this match will make \$10,000
available to Fr. Ssonko! Any amounts over the match will be applied to various other needs
as shown on the website.

Go to stpatricksgretna.org to access Donate Now! information for parishioners and non-
parishioners. Thank you for your continued prayers and monetary donations during this
Advent and Christmas season! Your financial gift to St. Patrick Parish to support our Father
Ssonko Missionary Fund is tax-deductible within the guidelines of US law.

SECOND COLLECTION FOR OUR SEMINARIANS Next Weekend—January 6-7

Next weekend, January 6-7, we will have
a second collection in support of our
Archdiocese of Omaha seminarians. The
seminary collection, along with other
gifts to the seminary fund, enables the
Archdiocese of Omaha to cover
educational costs and pay stipends for
living expenses for its students in major
and minor seminaries. A year's seminary
education averages nearly \$40,000. The
Archdiocese of Omaha doesn't require
seminarians to repay their costs if they fail to complete their studies all the way to
ordination, unlike some Catholic dioceses. Please consider supporting our seminarians in
prayer as well as financially. You can find more information about each of our seminarians
at <https://omahavocations.org/current-seminarians>.



*Jesus, our Good Shepherd, bless all our parishes with numerous priests, deacons, men and
women in religious life, consecrated laity and missionaries, according to the needs of the
entire world, which you love and wish to save. Assist our pastors and all who live a
consecrated life. Guide the steps of those who have responded generously to your call
and are preparing to receive Holy Orders or to profess vows. Look with love on young
people and call them to follow you. Help them to understand that in you alone can they
attain complete fulfillment. To this end we call on the powerful intercession of Mary,
Mother and model of all vocations. We beseech you to sustain our faith that the Father
will grant what you command us to ask. Amen. —Pope St. John Paul II*

PRAYER HABITS TO KEEP YOUR FAITH ALIVE

Five Practices Throughout the Day

As Saint Josemaría Escrivá said, "A Catholic without prayer is the same as a soldier without arms." In addition to the great treasure the Church offers us in the sacraments, Catholic Tradition provides various devotional practices to help us in our daily walk of faith. Here are five beautiful prayer habits to keep your faith alive throughout the day:



1. **Morning Prayer**—A great way to start the day is by offering it to God, entrusting to the Lord our activities, and asking for the grace to carry them out well. You can use any prayer you like, present your own intentions, or even pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Here's one example of a Morning Offering prayer: *O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.*
2. **Spiritual Reading**—One of the best spiritual reading options is the Gospels and the Daily Liturgy, but you can also read homilies, books about the lives of the saints, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Thus, by knowing more about faith, growing in friendship with God is possible. In general, 15 minutes is recommended to start, but you can increase it as your spiritual life develops.
3. **Mental Prayer**—Saint Teresa of Avila said, "Prayer is not thinking much but loving much," so don't see this moment as a list of petitions or memorized things you need to say. Use this moment to talk to God as a friend, presenting your life, pains, joys, struggles, dreams, and family. God loves you and listens to you. Even though He already knows what you are going through, He likes to hear from you. This can also take about 15 minutes, and you can increase as it becomes more natural for you.
4. **Pray the Rosary**—On the eve of His death on the Cross, Jesus, looking at His beloved disciple John, gave him Mary as his mother, and thus, all of us, His disciples, also received her as our mother. She is a short and safe path to God, as she knows how to obey the Father's will like no one else. Therefore, being close to her makes us want to be faithful to God and walk towards holiness. As Mother and Teacher, she wants to take care of us and lead us to Heaven.
5. **Examination of Conscience**—No matter how much we struggle with sin during the day, we often hurt God's heart with our attitudes, thoughts, and omissions. Therefore, the moment before going to sleep is an excellent opportunity to come before God with our weaknesses, ask for forgiveness, and make the intention of trying to be better tomorrow.

Let us remember: God always forgives us, we are the ones who tire of asking for forgiveness. It's always time to start over!

—Article by Church Pop

ANNUAL WALK FOR LIFE IN LINCOLN

Save Yourself a Free Bus Seat



The Gretna Knights of Columbus are sponsoring a free bus ride to the Walk For Life Saturday, January 27 in Lincoln. We leave the St. Patrick parking lot at 7:15 AM and return at approximately 2:45 PM. We will attend the 9 AM Mass at St. Mary's in Lincoln, participate in the Walk For Life from the Capitol to the UNL Student Union, in the Union we will listen to pro-life speakers and then leave at approximately 2 PM. This event is open to all ages. What a great way to show your support for pro-life with thousands of like minded people! We have 56 seats available, so contact Duane Benes at 402-250-6612 to save your seat and answer any questions.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

See Future Bulletin for Updated Report

We were unable to print this week's Stewardship Report. We apologize for any inconvenience and please know that we will publish this week's report in a future bulletin. Thank you for your patience.

STEWARDSHIP
REPORT



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

Gretna, Nebraska

THE KNIGHT'S CORNER



KNIGHTS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY



The Fr. John V. Wallace Knights of Columbus Council #10047 here at St. Patrick recently had their annual Christmas party. They recognized and thanked all the Knights, their families, and friends who helped volunteer at various events in 2023. The Annual Award winners were announced below.

Helping Hands Award:
Liz Beckman
Callie Nickerson

Rookie of the Year:
Clint Bollock

Helen M. Krajicek Lady
Knight of the Year
Award:
Leann Otto

Robert H. Ost diek Knight
of the Year Award:
Joe Krajicek

Dave and Irene Harris
Family of the Year Award:
Tony and Connie Schultz



NOW IS THE TIME TO BECOME A KNIGHT!



For Catholic men that are 18 years of age you can join the Fr. John V. Wallace Knights Council #10047 at St. Patrick here in Gretna and your dues will be taken care of while you are in school up to 4 years by

the Council. This includes trade schools, community colleges, and universities. If interested please contact our Chancellor and Membership Director, Randy Meerian at rmeerian@gmail.com or 402-981-6471.

Knights of Columbus

Grand Knight, Bruce Jefferies.....402-521-4262
Deputy Grand Knight, John Schaffert ..402-672-7903
Financial Secretary, Marty Stednitz.....402-332-3840
Chancellor & Membership Director, Randy Meerian402-981-6471



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH
Gretna, Nebraska

MASS INTENTIONS

An individual may ask a Priest to offer a Mass for several reasons: for example, in thanksgiving, for the intentions of another person (such as on a birthday or if they are ill), or, as is most common, for the repose of the soul of one who has died (†). To request a Mass intention, stop by the Parish Office to schedule. A minimum of \$10 per Mass is requested.

MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST

7:30 AM For Our Parishioners

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2ND

6:00 PM † Bill Sempeck

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3RD

7:30 AM † Dick Beran

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4TH

7:30 AM Gregg Staroscik

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5TH

7:30 AM † Ray and Francie Hottovy

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6TH

5:00 PM † Joyce Keller

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH

8:00 AM † Rod Kalisek
10:00 AM For Our Parishioners
12:00 PM † Marie Ulrich

LITURGICAL VESTMENT COLORS

- **White**—JOY—Christmas, Easter, Mary, Saints
- **Red**—LOVE—The Passion, Holy Spirit, Martyrs
- **Green**—HOPE—Ordinary Time
- **Violet**—HUMILITY—Advent, Lent
- **Rose**—JOY—Gaudete, Laetare Sundays



Let us pray for
Richard Smith,
Elaine Sedlacek,
Judy Burke,
Terry Harouff,
Deacon Steve

Grandinetti, Nicole (daughter of Chris Christensen), Ronald Baxter (Fr. Baxter's dad), Paul Polt, and Leanne Robb. Pray for John and Wanda Jonas, Chris Wheeler, Norm Wiemers, Ed, Barb McMahon, Ian McGovern (son of Mark and Pam), and Jo Anne Lyons (mom of Theresa Gulizia). Pray for Marolyn, Lil Herbstritt, Brad, Deacon David Medeiros, and Reece Bittner (grandson of Bruce Jefferies). Pray also for all our parishioners who are homebound, hospitalized, and in nursing homes, and for all our parishioners and loved ones who have recently passed away.

To add a loved one to the prayer line, please call Corliss Lovstad at 402-968-5877 or email her at clovstad@gmail.com.

THE WEEK AHEAD

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST—THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH—NEW YEAR'S EVE—NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM Rosary—Sanctuary
8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, Noon Mass—Sanctuary
9:00 AM to 9:50 AM Patriotic Rosary—Sanctuary

MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST—SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD—OFFICE CLOSED

7:30 AM to 7:50 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 8:00 AM)—Sanctuary

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2ND

5:30 PM to 5:50 PM Rosary (before Mass begins at 6:00 PM)—Sanctuary
6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Knights of Columbus Hour of Prayer—Sanctuary
6:30 PM to 6:40 PM Our Lady of Perpetual Help Devotion (after Mass)—Sanctuary
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM Knights of Columbus Meeting—Parish Center AB

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3RD—NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7:00 AM to 7:20 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 7:30 AM)—Sanctuary
8:00 AM to 8:15 AM Liturgy of the Hours—Behind the Tabernacle
9:00 AM to 10:30 AM Faith Connection—Father Hitch Room

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4TH

7:00 AM to 7:20 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 7:30 AM)—Sanctuary
6:00 PM to 7:00 PM TOA Committee Meeting—Basement Commons
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM RCIA—Parish Center C

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5TH

6:30 AM to 7:30 AM Men's Faith Sharing—Father Hitch Room
7:00 AM to 7:20 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 7:30 AM)—Sanctuary
8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Women's Faith Sharing—Father Hitch Room

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6TH

4:00 PM to 4:40 PM Confession—Confessional
4:30 PM to 4:50 PM Rosary (before Mass begins at 5:00 PM)—Sanctuary

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH—THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM Rosary—Sanctuary
8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, Noon Mass—Sanctuary
8:55 AM to 9:55 AM Religious Education Classes—RE classrooms, Basement Commons
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM Baptisms—Sanctuary and Narthex

THE PROPHETS: MESSENGERS OF GOD'S MERCY

Adult Ascension Bible Study

If we consider that God is the Divine Bridegroom and the Church is His Bride, then the prophets can be seen as "spiritual marriage counselors." They afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted, calling us to return to our covenant relationship with God. They urge us to repentance, warn us of the dangers of sin, and announce the blessings of faithfulness. Their prophetic words speak to us even today, as they draw us closer to our Heavenly Bridegroom.

It is nearly impossible to understand the work and the message of Jesus without the prophetic books. In *The Prophets: Messengers of God's Mercy*, presenter Thomas Smith examines who the prophets were, their role during their time, and the meaning of their messages for our own time. Discover how God is constantly calling you to a deeper relationship as well as the ways you are called to be the voice of God to others.

Join fellow parishioners and come to know the prophets and how their messages shed light on our faith and our lives. St Patrick of Gretna will begin a ten-week Bible study *Prophets: Messengers of God's Mercy* on Monday, January 15 at 7 PM. Participants will meet every week to view an engaging video presentation followed by a time of lively group discussion and fellowship.

Register at <https://stpatricksgretna.org>. You will also need to order study materials from Ascension. If you need help with registration or ordering, contact Ginny Giebelhaus at ginnyg651@aol.com or 402-319-5806. If you have general questions about the study or would like to volunteer as a small group facilitator, contact Jean Hlavacek at 402-504-4222 or jean.jeweler@gmail.com. Come discover the messages the prophets have for you.



LAY MINISTER'S SCHEDULE

The Epiphany of the Lord

JANUARY 6TH
5:00 PM

Sacristan
Larry Neppi

Lectors
Donna Bruck
(Read the 1st Reading)

Crystal Schroeder
(Read the 2nd Reading)

EMHCs
Wendy Neppi
Kylie Karnish
Adam Kreikemeier
Diane Sherwood

Ushers
Larry Neppi
Chad Soupir
Lisa Willert
Jeff Wollenburg

Rosary Reciter
Jayne Schram

Altar Servers
Aslyn Ronk
Kenley Ronk
Need Sub

Greeters
Nancy Kirkpatrick
Tim Kirkpatrick

JANUARY 7TH
8:00 AM

Sacristan
Tony Schultz

Lectors
Claudia Perchal
(Read the 1st Reading)

Sandy Scheef
(Read the 2nd Reading)

EMHCs
Barb Applegate
Julene Crockett
Marilyn Havel
Chrsita Pichler
Deacon Ken Broz

Ushers
Larry Scheef
Tony Schultz
Pat Shurtliff
Bob Sis

Rosary Reciter
Tim Gilligan

Altar Servers
Drew Garcia
Emersyn Pichler
Need Sub

Greeters
Mary Brown
Mary Maw

Hilcrest SR
Marty Stednitz
Sally Stednitz

JANUARY 7TH
10:00 AM

Sacristan
Andi Towey

Lectors
Jolene Jefferies
(Read the 1st Reading)

Judy Weier
(Read the 2nd Reading)

EMHCs
Cleo Nienaber
Jim Hain
Norm Svoboda
Tony Tiefenthaler

Ushers
Clint Bollock
Dan Dauner
Bruce Jefferies
Tom Nienaber

Rosary Reciter
Kathy Dauner

Altar Servers
Ihrey Reiman
Skylar Reiman
Riley Reiman
Rianna Reiman
Marlie Reiman

Greeters
Andrew Urban
Need Sub

JANUARY 7TH
NOON

Sacristan
Ginny Giebelhaus

Lectors
Stephanie Lampe
(Read Both 1st and 2nd Readings)

Need Sub
(Standby: if a Sub is Needed)

EMHCs
Doris Williams
Ginny Giebelhaus
Jennifer Loosvelt
Norma Hintz
Deacon Larry Heck

Ushers
Ginny Giebelhaus
Marty White
Doris Williams
Mary Zeigler

Rosary Reciter
Norm Svoboda

Altar Servers
Thomas Janda
James Janda
Need Sub

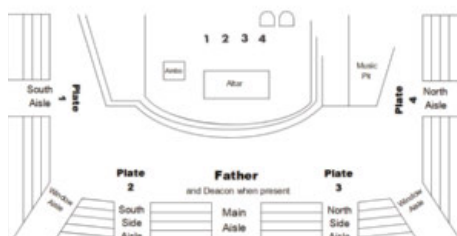
Greeters
Jeanette Roy
Mary Zeigler

Vocations Crucifix
Need Sub

If you are unable to serve at your assigned time, please find a substitute. The Parish Office greatly appreciates your help, support and patience as we work together in providing Mass to our parish family!

The Vocations Crucifix can be picked up after any of the weekend Masses from the Sacristy, and should be returned before the following weekend.

EMHC STATION MAP



EMHC Positions (see diagram above):

- 1) South Aisle
- 2) South Side Aisle
- 3) North Side Aisle
- 4) North Aisle
- 5) Main Aisle—Father and Deacon when present

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH
Gretna, Nebraska

PARISH STAFF

PASTOR

Fr. Gregory P. Baxter.....402-332-4444
gpbaxter@archomaha.org
Residence.....402-332-4428
Emergencies (if facing danger or death), call:
402-332-4428

DEACONS

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Deacon Larry Heck.....402-572-1319

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DIRECTOR OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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PASTORAL MINISTRY (ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND & FUNERALS)

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PASTORAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Matt Ramm.....402-416-0596

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Kevin Kaup.....402-525-1469

HOLY SEPULCHRE CEMETERY

Jerry Thoendel.....402-332-3475

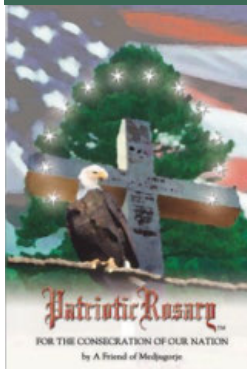
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Bruce Jefferies.....402-521-4262
bjefferies16117@gmail.com



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH
Gretna, Nebraska

PATRIOTIC ROSARY 9 AM on December 31



The St. Patrick Our Lady Queen of Peace Rosary Guild invites all parishioners to join us in praying for peace in our world, peace in our Church, and peace in our homes by praying a Patriotic Rosary with us on Sunday, December 31 at 9 AM. This rosary will be complete with patriotic hymns and inspirational quotes. The rosary will be

led by US Army Colonel Phillip Lenz, Active; US Air Force Lt. Colonel Timothy Hall, Retired; US Air Force Jr. MSgt. James Cowan, Retired; US Air Force SSgt. Shellie Cowan, Retired; and Sharon Wuerfele, widow of Michael Wuerfele, Nebraska Army National Guard serving 40 years of active duty. Complimentary homemade rosaries—made by Our Lady Queen of Peace Rosary Guild—will be available in the narthex for anyone who wants one. For questions call Kathy Dauner 402-707-7393.

TOA TICKETS ON SALE NOW Saturday, February 10

Tickets for the Preschool Taste of the Arts (TOA) Fundraiser are live on the parish website now. Be sure to get your tickets early at stpatricksgretna.org. This year's fundraiser will be Saturday, February 10 at 6 PM here at St. Patrick, and will be a tailgate party theme.



FREE CHRISTMAS BOOK *Beautiful Eucharist*



Thanks to a generous donor, we are offering Matthew Kelly's recent book, *Beautiful Eucharist*, to our parishioners for free as a Christmas gift. This book features reflections by several popular Catholic speakers including Fr. Mike Schmitz and Bobby and Jackie Angel. Pick up your family's copy in the narthex of the Church.

WHEN YOU FEEL YOU'VE LOST JESUS, TURN TO MARY *Our Lady of Sorrow Brings Us to Her Son*

Joyful religious sisters, brothers, and priests are almost magnetic in how they draw young people to consider living lives of radical holiness. As a young girl, I felt this attraction to religious life, and during my early adulthood, I seriously considered this way of life. It was certainly a winding journey, one that climaxed with a beautiful moment where the Lord spoke directly and clearly to me in 2020. After a few years of seriously discerning with a religious order, I understood that God was not calling me to enter the convent after all. This realization initially brought the fruits of good discernment: peace, joy, and clarity.



But this moment didn't last forever. As a member of those who have officially "discerned out," I quickly experienced a surge of discomfort and sadness. In addition to the peace and clarity, there are also bumps, hills, and drops filled with doubt, uncertainty, mourning, and even shame—shame that, somehow, I must have missed my cue. I was left not knowing what direction to take, and at times I felt stuck or even lost. Even three years later, I sometimes experience the uncomfortable feeling that maybe I heard God wrong, that maybe my current singlehood is an indication that I messed up.

PRAYING FIAT AMID THE SORROW

Recently, I took a weekend away at a hermitage to rejuvenate and refocus. Prior to going, I felt drawn to meditate on Our Lady's Seven Sorrows. I spent long periods praying through each sorrow, but at one point, my own discernment journey began coming to mind. I attempted to shove down the familiar queasiness at my guilt and confusion. After a bit of internal fighting, I finally brought it to the Lord and shared my thoughts with Him: While I wanted to trust Him, I couldn't help but feel discomfort in still not knowing my vocation. I had been so sure where God was leading me, but then I ended up somewhere completely different, and I wasn't sure what to do about it.

Well, our Lord (an excellent Retreat Master, by the way) quickly responded to my prayer—not with answers, per se, but through a strong sense of Our Lady's presence and empathy. One of the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady was losing Jesus for three days in Jerusalem. If anyone has experienced the sensation of "discomfort in not knowing," it was certainly Our Lady when she, Joseph, and Jesus went to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12. One moment, she had her son, and the next—gone. I'm sure she felt her heart drop to her stomach like every mother does when, for half a moment, it looks like her child is missing. Except this was for three whole days.

I read a meditation that considered what was going through Our Lady's mind during these three days. Scripture is clear that she and Joseph searched with "great anxiety," but what flashed through her mind? Did she consider, "is this my son's time?" Did she fear that she would never see Him again? Did she think, "I never should have let Him out of my sight?"

Despite our questions, we can be certain of one thing Mary would have done: She would have repeated her fiat: "Your will be done." A phrase once said in joy at the Annunciation, but one that encompasses Our Lady's spirit of surrender to the Father, as she certainly would have done in these moments, too. When day after day passed without finding Jesus: fiat. When she finally did find Him and exclaimed, "Why did you do this to us?," His answer that He must be about His Father's business left her perplexed. And still, in spite of lingering confusion, she would have prayed: fiat.

TRUST IN THE WAITING

It was in contemplating this mystery that my own shame melted away. The Blessed Mother, my mother, understood me so completely because she had lived it herself. She was following God's will by taking her son to the annual Temple pilgrimage. And yet, somehow, the trip was completely turned on its head. I felt Mary's reassurance that, in my vocational discernment, I didn't fail God. She, too, didn't always understand what God was doing in her life, where He was leading her, or why she had to wait to find Him again. What is important is continuing to trust God and surrender to Him even in our lack of understanding.

Our Lady's presence and companionship is something in which we can all find comfort. Whether we are still discerning a vocation, worrying about a loved one, or heartbroken over loss, Mary is the best empathetic listener to our sorrows. She can comfort her children in ways only a mother can. And, in her motherly way, she lovingly shares her wisdom with us and helps us to take the next step out of our uncertainty and worry and into trust: fiat.

—Article by Radiant Magazine

HOW IS SOMEONE NAMED A DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Great Teachers of the Faith



The Doctors of the Church are teachers of the faith who have demonstrated exemplary holiness and have deepened the whole Church's understanding of the Catholic faith. They must be officially declared doctors by a papal proclamation. Such men and women also are known particularly for the depth of understanding and the orthodoxy of their theological teachings. Though

their teachings are not infallible, being a "doctor" means that they contributed significantly to the formulation of Christian teaching in at least one significant area in a way that has impacted later generations. Through the Middle Ages, the title and process of being named a doctor remained a fluid and informal one. In the 13th century, however, the Church formalized the process by which the Church could honor persons with the title and then put out the first official list of Doctors of the Church. There are three requirements for being named a Doctor of the Church. First is great sanctity. Thus only those who have already been declared to be saints by the Church may be named a doctor. A second requirement is eminent learning. This is often demonstrated by the fact that they were known to be great teachers of the faith. The third requirement is a proclamation by the Church. Usually, such proclamation is made by the pope.

—Article by Simply Catholic

OACCW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

High School Senior Catholic Girls

The Omaha Urban Area of Catholic Women (OUCCW) is offering a \$500 scholarship to a High School Senior Catholic young woman. There is also a \$250 Honorable Mention award. The first place (OUCCW) application will be forwarded to compete for the \$750 scholarship offered by the OACCW (Omaha Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women). Application forms are available on the OACCW website OACCW.org, and have been sent to the guidance counselors of area high schools. All High School Senior Catholic young women are encouraged to apply. If you have questions about the application or the process, please call Cathy Vak at 402-391-0484. Applications for the OACCW Scholarship must be submitted by January 15. Completed applications are to be sent to: Cathy Vak, 3255 S. 77th Street, Omaha NE 68124.



FIRST FRIDAY AFTERNOON MASS AND ANNOINTING

Gretna - Springfield Family of Parishes



On First Fridays, St. Joseph (100 9th St, Springfield) has a 2 PM Mass with Anointing of the Sick available and confessions beforehand. This Mass is specially scheduled to accommodate older and limited mobility persons who may have difficulty attending an early morning Mass or sitting through an entire Sunday Mass. The church and parking are easily accessible. All are welcome.

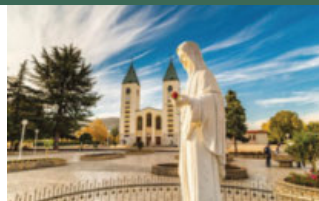
YOU'RE INVITED

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje and Zadar—April 22 to May 5, 2024

It starts with a stirring...an ache...a longing to withdraw from the everyday routine and grow closer to Our Lord. Our Blessed Mother invites you to visit one of the most spiritual and peaceful places on the planet, a place of spiritual growth and conversion where she still appears today. The visionaries tell us that no one goes to Medjugorje by accident.

You are invited to participate in a life-changing pilgrimage to Zadar (Croatia) and Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina) from April 22 to May 5, 2024, hosted by Mirjana Soldo, visionary. We will be staying at her hotel in Medjugorje for a few days and also at the Two Hearts Hotel. Our Spiritual Director is Reverend Michael Swanton, Associate Pastor of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Omaha. Our registered group leader is Jolene Jefferies who currently serves as the Parish Manager of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Gretna.

How will you respond to our Blessed Mother's loving invitation? For questions or to learn more about the trip itinerary, cost, and related details, please contact Jolene Jefferies at 402-521-0717 or jmjefferies@archomaha.org.



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

Gretna, Nebraska

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

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jjwotipka@archomaha.org

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Sue Orosco.....402-332-3692

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Megan Seamann.....meseamann@archomaha.org

ADVERTISE FOR YOUR MINISTRY GROUP

Does your parish ministry group have opportunities for others to get involved? Contact Megan Seamann, meseamann@archomaha.org, about getting your parish ministry group opportunities advertised.

EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL PRAYER

Heal us, Live in Us

Lord Jesus Christ, you give us your flesh and blood for the life of the world, and you desire that all people come to the Supper of the Sacrifice of the Lamb. Renew in your Church the truth, beauty, and goodness contained in the Most Blessed Eucharist. Jesus living in the Eucharist, come and live in me. Jesus healing in the Eucharist, come and heal me. Jesus sacrificing yourself in the Eucharist, come and suffer in me. Jesus rising in the Eucharist, come and rise to new life in me. Jesus loving in the Eucharist, come and love in me. Lord Jesus Christ, through the Paschal Mystery of your death and resurrection made present in every Holy Mass, pour out your healing love on your Church and on our world. Grant that as we lift you up during this time of Eucharistic Revival, your Holy Spirit may draw all people to join us at this Banquet of Life. You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of the Eucharist, pray for us.



Follow St. Patrick
on Facebook at
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ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH Gretna, Nebraska

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- BOYS TOWN NATIONAL HOTLINE**
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Website.....www.boystown.org
- CATHOLIC ANSWERS**
Phone.....1-888-318-7884
Website.....www.catholic.com
- CATHOLIC CEMETERIES**
Grief & Healing Counselor.....402-391-3711
Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Gretna.....402-332-3475
- CATHOLIC CHARITIES—OMAHA**
Phone.....402-554-0520
Website.....ccomaha.org
- CATHOLIC VOICE ONLINE**
Website.....catholicvoiceomaha.com
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Website.....leastofmybrethren.org
- MARRIAGE RESOURCES**
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Retrouvaille.....1-800-470-2230
Retrouvaille.....www.helpourmarriage.org
- MASS TIMES NATIONWIDE**
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- NEBRASKA HOMESCHOOL NETWORK**
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- SPIRIT CATHOLIC RADIO—FM 102.7**
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Website.....www.spiritcatholicradio.com
- ST. BENEDICT CENTER (RETREATS IN SCHUYLER)**
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Website.....christthekingpriory.com/sbcbabout
- ST. JOHN PAUL II NEWMAN CENTER**
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- STRIVE (BREAK FREE FROM PORNOGRAPHY)**
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Website.....strive21.com
- WOMEN'S CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT
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AROUND THE ARCHDIOCESE

KNOW YOUR FAITH—ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON, JANUARY 8-FEBRUARY 12

Join Evangelium Institute's Deacon Peter Kennedy on Mondays starting January 8 from 7 PM to 8:30 PM at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (5419 N 114th St, Omaha), as he takes a deep dive into *The Gospel of John*. This course will begin with an introduction to the gospel and various key themes. We will then take time to look at certain passages in greater depth: the Prologue, the Wedding at Cana, Nicodemus, the Woman at the Well, the Raising of Lazarus, and the Washing of the Feet among others. We will discover why some scholars call this, "the Gospel of Divine Intimacy." Don't miss out—register today at www.eicatholic.org/know-your-faith.



CELEBRATION OF LIFE BANQUET—ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, JANUARY 31



Nebraskaans Embracing Life 50th Annual Celebration of Life Banquet with our keynote speaker Bishop Emeritus Fabian Bruskewitz of the Lincoln Diocese. Please join us at St. Vincent de Paul Kampschneider Hall (14330 Eagle Run Dr, Omaha) on January 31. Social at 5:30 PM and the dinner and program will begin at 6:30 PM. Reservations, sponsorship, and advertising can be found at www.NebraskaansEmbracingLife.org/donate. Can't

come? Watch the LIFEstream on our website! We will honor Bishop Bruskewitz with our Lifetime Achievement Award, and school board members Terri Cunningham-Swanson and others. Please join us and help to support our mission to defend life, from conception, without exception! Reservations \$75 per person or a table for \$700 can be made at www.NebraskaansEmbracingLife.org. Event sponsors, advertisers, and volunteers are needed! Visit our website or contact our office at 402-399-0299. "Decline to Sign" the abortion on demand up to birth amendment circulating in your area!

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE—LINCOLN, FEBRUARY 9-11

"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord.'" Whose voice are you listening to, the world's or God's? Invite God into your marriage by participating in the next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience on February 9-11 in Lincoln. For questions, or to find out more about a Virtual Encounter Weekend, feel free to contact Brenda and Gary Granger at 720-213-8833 or visit www.wwme.org. Space is limited, so reserve your weekend early. Don't just give each other things this Christmas, give each other the gift of great communication, a deep love and a marriage filled with God by participating in a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience.



SILVER CELEBRATION DINNER—COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA, FEBRUARY 24



Join us for a Silver Celebration! Spirit Catholic Radio's annual Spirit Celebration Dinner is going to be extra special in 2024 as it will officially kick off our 25th year of broadcasting! Join the Spirit Catholic Radio team for an evening of faith, food, fellowship, and fun with keynote speaker and listener-favorite, Dr. Ray Guarendi! Dr. Ray is the host of *The Dr. Is In* which is heard weekdays at Noon on your Spirit Catholic Radio Network. This celebration will take place at the Mid-America Convention Center (1 Arena Way, Council Bluffs, IA)

on Saturday, February 24 with the social hour beginning at 6 PM and the dinner and program beginning at 7 PM. Tickets to the Silver Celebration Dinner will go on sale December 27, during our *3 Days of Christmas Music* (December 27-29). Visit spiritcatholicradio.com/silver for details on additional events we have planned for you in 2024 as well!

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Your Spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly, that my life may only be a radiance of Yours. Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus! Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. Amen.

—St. Teresa of Calcutta's prayer after Communion adapted from a prayer written by St. John Henry Newman.

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