

Fr. Simon Sez



Confirmation Retreat

Deadline: I sent a letter out to all parents of our high school Confirmation candidates in both parishes. Our only parish organized Confirmation retreat

this YFF mission year will be the only retreat available organized by our diocese on Saturday, February 4, 2023 at Holy Name Parish in Watertown 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. We will stay for the optional Sunday Vigil Mass there starting at 5:00 pm. We are working on organized transportation as well which will be by charter bus if affordable or private cars. Any adults can attend for free as we need chaperones and small group leaders. **For planning purposes, we have to have responses by this Wednesday evening, January 18!** Please let me know whether each Confirmation candidate can or cannot attend and whether each parent can or cannot be a chaperone or driver. Indicate this by completing the form at the bottom of my letter. Also, please complete the attached forms as applicable: Parent/Guardian Consent Form & Liability Waiver, Adult Liability Waiver, and Volunteer Driver Application. We are seeking any adults who can help as well! I will be leading both parish groups. Fr. David Axtmann is the priest substitute for me that weekend. Attending a Confirmation retreat before confirmation is a firm requirement of diocese policy.

Operation Andrew Dinner: As part of the Vocations Office work to help young men discern the Lord's call for their lives, they are organizing this dinner on January 31, 2023 in Aberdeen for a night of prayer, a meal, and fellowship with Bishop DeGrood and priests of our diocese. We are inviting high school and young adult men who are open to the Lord possibly calling them to be great priests! Contact Fr. Simon.



Christmas Thanks: Thank you to everyone who helped celebrate Christmas in our parishes. Thank you for being open to modifying how our children participate in the blessing of the manger before the

Christmas Eve Masses. Our young children certainly enjoyed our special guest in Sacred Heart Church after Christmas Eve Mass! Personally, I thank all of you for your Christmas food, gifts and well wishes. May you all have a blessed New Year!

Parish Contribution Envelopes and Calendars: If you want a parish giving envelope and have not been getting one, please let us know. They are in both church gathering spaces. Calendars for this new year are available too.

Diocese Announcements: For a full list of upcoming events and available Church ministries visit the diocese website www.sfcatholic.org. The Lourdes Center offers counseling services at locations around the diocese and by Telehealth. If you or someone in your family is in need of some assistance, call 1-800-700-7867 for an appointment.

Perfect Offering: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time



Isaiah 49:3, 5–6
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7–10
1 Corinthians 1:1–3
John 1:29–34

Jesus speaks through the prophet Isaiah in today's First Reading.

He tells us of the mission given to Him by the Father from the womb: "You are My servant," He said to Me."

Servant and Son, our Lord was sent to lead a new exodus—to raise up the exiled tribes of Israel, to gather and restore them to God. More than that, He was to be a light to the nations, that God's salvation may reach to the ends of the earth (see Acts 13:46–47).

Before the first exodus, a lamb was offered in sacrifice and its blood painted on the Israelites' door posts. The blood of the lamb identified their homes and the Lord "passed over" these in executing judgment on the Egyptians (see Exodus 12:1–23, 27).

In the new exodus, Jesus is the "Lamb of God," as John beholds Him in the Gospel today (see 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18–19). Our Lord sings of this in today's Psalm. He has come, He says, to offer His body to do the will of God (see Hebrews 10:3–13).

The sacrifices, oblations, holocausts, and sin-offerings given after the first exodus had no power to take away sins (see Hebrews 10:4). They were meant not to save but to teach (see Galatians 3:24). In offering these sacrifices, the people were to learn self-sacrifice—that they were made for worship, to offer themselves freely to God and to delight in His will.

Only Jesus could make that perfect offering of Himself. And through His sacrifice, He has given us ears open to obedience and made it possible for us to hear the Father's call to holiness, as Paul says in today's Epistle.

He has made us children of God, baptized in the blood of the Lamb (see Revelation 7:14). And we are to join our sacrifice to His, to offer our bodies—our lives—as living sacrifices in the spiritual worship of the Mass (see Romans 12:1).

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