

Merry Christmas & Welcome  
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St. Matthew's Christmas Tree

News about St. Matthew Parish & School in Oak Creek, Wisconsin

December 2010

# Merry Christmas and Welcome to St. Matthew Parish

## *Greeting to all,*

On behalf of myself, St. Matthew's Communications Committee, Fr. Patrick O'Loughlin, and all of the staff, I want to wish you and your loved ones the most blessed Christmas as you once again pause and remember the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We joyously give our lives in service to God, and look forward with great anticipation to 2011 as we continue our faith journey together.

If you are new to our area or have only occasionally come to St. Matthew Parish, we want to warmly welcome you to our Celebration of Christ's Birth. St. Matthew's is a welcoming community of believers and we'd love to have you join us regularly as we celebrate the Eucharist together. Come pray with us; sing with us; and celebrate the gift of faith we have been given. We hope you will come back often! Some of the changes over the past year include the new start time (4:00 pm) for the Saturday mass. Successful programs, like the GIFT sessions, continue to expand our knowledge of Worship.

I hope you will enjoy this very special Christmas edition of "The Buzz" which covers a field trip taken by the 7th Grade Class, photos from our parish's school students coming together to decorate a Christmas Tree at Cathedral Square in downtown Milwaukee, and a close-up look at Christmas traditions celebrated by Parish families.

So as you celebrate Christmas, with whatever traditions and activities that you and yours enjoy, take advantage of the opportunity to praise God afresh for the great gift of His Son. If you have Christ you can be sure that, from your heavenly Father's kind hand, you have and will have everything you need.

For more information about St. Matthew, call the parish office (762-4200). There are many ways we can serve you and many ways you can get involved.



**ROBERT TABERN**  
Chairman, St. Matthew's  
Communications Committee



# Field Trip Highlights History, Religion, and Art



On Tuesday, November 16th, students from St. Matthew's 7th Grade Class took part in a field trip that highlighted some of the Milwaukee area's rich religious history and art. The first stop of the day was at Saint Francis de Sales Seminary in St. Francis. The students were first greeted by Fr. Bill Stanfield, former Pastor of St. Matthew Parish. He now works full time at the Seminary. Fr. Bill gave the students a quick overview of the complex. Students learned that in 1853, a papal envoy accompanied Bishop John Martin Henni to a site just south of Milwaukee - Henni's proposed new location for a local seminary. Legend has it that the envoy, overcome by the site's beauty, exclaimed: "Make this place holy!" Bishop John Martin Henni established the Seminary in his Milwaukee residence in 1845. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee was only two years old and urgently needed priests to serve German Catholic immigrants. Ten years later, the seminary moved just south of Milwaukee, to a site that included land from the Lake Drive Franciscan Sisters. The new building was dedicated January 29, 1856, the feast day of St. Francis

de Sales. The original seminary building, named Henni Hall in 1956, was renovated in 1989 and remains the center of Seminary life. In the 1970's, the Seminary offered graduate degree programs for lay candidates. In the 1980's, programs were added for the diaconate and for lay ministers. Saint Francis de Sales Seminary began its academic collaboration with Sacred Heart School of Theology in 2006. Today the Seminary again focuses solely on priestly formation.



After the brief history lesson from Fr. Bill, the students met a representative from the Seminary who took them on a guided tour of the facilities. One of the highlights for some students was walking to the top floor of the building and climbing on the spiral staircase to the cupola. From that vantage point, one can see almost half of Milwaukee County - from the WE Energies Power Plant in Oak Creek all the way to Downtown Milwaukee and even out to Miller Park and the water towers out by the Medical College of Wisconsin. The representative from the Seminary



explained to students that at one point, the cupola of the Seminary and the Cathedral in Downtown Milwaukee were once some of the highest buildings in the area - and early settlers would actually use light signals from both buildings to communicate with one another. Students also got to get a quick glimpse at an unrestored area of the Seminary, that showed what the buildings looked like back in the 1920's.

There are currently a total of five students who are in the Seminary's Class of 2011, including: Deacon Kevin Barnekow of West Allis, Deacon Javier Guativa of Racine, Deacon Christopher Klusman of Milwaukee, Deacon Hugo Londono of Milwaukee, and Deacon Kevin Mc Manaman of Cudahy. While this may seem like a lot of graduates; it's not. In years past, dozens of seminarians graduated from the Saint Francis de Sales. That number has significantly dropped in recent years. As Fr. Bill explained to the students, "In the past year we had 11 priests who retired, and we are planning to only have 5 new priests this year graduate from the Seminary. That means 6 parishes in

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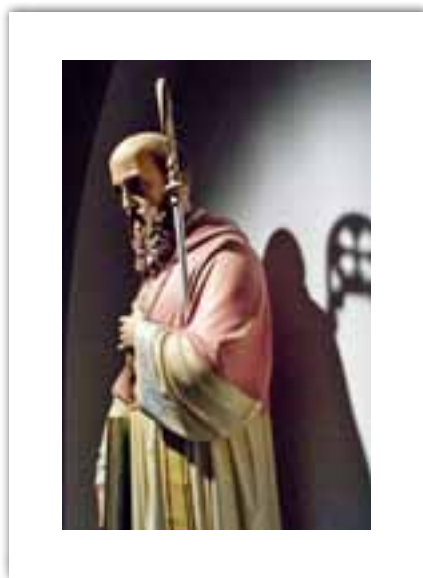


Southeast Wisconsin are going to lose their priests this year – and may have to close and combine with other parishes. This is a trend that we have been seeing now year after year.”

Saint Francis Seminary is located off Lake Drive in Saint Francis and is opened to the public during daylight hours. The grounds feature a number of small hiking trails and excellent solitude to pray in.

After their tour of the Seminary, the students hit the bus for a ride to Downtown Milwaukee and the Milwaukee School of Engineering’s Art Museum (a.k.a. – The Grohmann Museum). Seventh Grade teacher, Mrs. McDonald, said, “Last year we took the students for the tour of the Seminary and then to an animal shelter. I still wanted to do the Seminary Tour this year because that is important for the kids to learn about... but I also wanted to change things up a bit. A parent told me about the Grohmann Museum. and I think it’s just awesome! I tell you, I want to come back here myself again.”

The first stop for students at the Grohmann Museum. was at the Rooftop Sculpture Garden. A dozen large, bronze sculptures - men toiling in the field and foundry, heaving hammers or pinching molten metal with hot tongs - perch on the roof line of the building. These fellows, each about 9 feet tall and weighing in at a thousand pounds a piece, have a commanding view of a city that was built on the hard work they depict. The commissioned sculptures, replicas of smaller bronzes in the collection, were fabricated in the Philippines through a process called lost-foam casting that transformed them from their original size of about 19-inches to larger-than-life scale. The process involves sculpting the works out of polystyrene and then creating a casting, which employs a series of steps using wax, ceramic and molten bronze. In addition to the 12 large-scale works, another six sculptures are displayed in the 10,000 square-foot garden’s interior. The space is perfect place for enjoying sculpture, contemplation or entertaining.



The students were then taken on a guided tour of some of the painting in the museum’s “Man at Work” Gallery. With more than 800 European and American paintings and sculptures that depict various forms of work, the exhibit is the world’s most comprehensive collection of its kind. The artworks span over 400 years of history (17-20th centuries) and comprise a variety of styles and subjects that document the evolution of organized work, from manpower and horsepower to water, steam and electrical power. The works were gifted to MSOE in 2001 from the collection of Milwaukee businessman and collector Dr. Eckhart Grohmann. This is the first art collection acquired by the university.

The Grohmann Museum is located at 1000 N. Broadway in Milwaukee and is open to the public. For more information about visiting, call (414) 277-2300 or visit their website, [http://www.msoe.edu/about\\_msoc/manatwork](http://www.msoe.edu/about_msoc/manatwork).

From religion, to history, to art... Mrs. McDonald’s 7th Grade Class got a taste of it all on their recent field trip to the Seminary and a little-known art museum in Downtown Milwaukee.

— Robert Tabern

# ST. MATTHEW STUDENTS SHARE HOLIDAY TRADITIONS



“On Christmas Eve we have a gift exchange where everyone picks one present that is wrapped up and then we open it. We go for three rounds – and if you like your gift you can keep it or try and exchange it with someone else. Then we say prayers to God every hour from 3 p.m. until Midnight. We stay up until Midnight and go to Mass.”

*Joe Wasilik*



“The whole family camps out in the living room on Christmas Eve! The tradition started when some of my younger siblings wanted to stay up all night and wait for Santa to arrive. Now it’s just a fun time where everyone gets together and spends the night in the same room.”

*Dhanya Attipetty*



“I usually go to my great aunt’s house and we have turkey, lamb, and even a special birthday cake for Jesus. We also sing ‘Happy Birthday’ to the Baby Jesus and celebrate like he is right there with us. After all, that is what we are celebrating, Jesus’ Birthday.”

*Kayleigh Pook*

“While a lot of people put their Christmas Tree up right after Thanksgiving, my family actually waits until Christmas Eve to put up our tree. This tradition started several years ago when my mom was too busy to put up the tree until Christmas Eve, and now it just stuck.”

*Amanda Horman*



“On Christmas Eve my Dad’s side of my family come to my house and we all perform different plays and skits. Some of them in the past have been ‘Frosty the Snowman’ and ‘Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer.’ We also do Christmas songs and even come up with dances.”

*Rachel Chilson*



“On Christmas Eve, my family goes to Candy Cane Lane where we all look at the different homes that are decorated in lights. Then, we go home and eat a fancy dinner with turkey, chicken, potatoes, corn, etc. and open presents with our family.”

*Nicole Burchardt*

# CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN THE U.S.

## Where did they come from?



### THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING

According to legend, a kindly nobleman grew despondent over the death of his beloved wife and foolishly squandered his fortune. This left his three young daughters without dowries and thus facing a life of spinsterhood. The generous St. Nicholas, hearing of the girls' plight, set forth to help. Wishing to remain anonymous, he rode his white horse by the nobleman's house and threw three small pouches of gold coins down the chimney where they were fortuitously captured by the stockings the young women had hung by the fireplace to dry.



### MISTLETOE

Mistletoe was used by Druid priests 200 years before the birth of Christ in their winter celebrations. They revered the plant since it had no roots yet remained green during the cold months of winter. The ancient Celts believed mistletoe to have magical healing powers and used it as an antidote for poison, infertility, and to ward of evil spirits. The plant was also seen as a symbol of peace, and it is said that among Romans, enemies who met under mistletoe would lay down their weapons and embrace. Scandinavians associated the plant with Frigga, their goddess of love, and it may be from this that we derive the custom of kissing under the mistletoe. Those who kissed under the mistletoe had the promise of happiness and good luck in the following year.



### HOLLY, IVY, AND GREENERY

In Northern Europe Christmas occurred during the middle of winter, when ghosts and demons could be heard howling in the winter winds. Boughs of holly, believed to have magical powers since they remained green through the harsh winter, were often placed over the doors of homes to drive evil away. Greenery was also brought indoors to freshen the air and brighten the mood during the long, dreary winter. Legend also has it that holly sprang from the footsteps of Christ as he walked the earth. The pointed leaves were said to represent the crown of thorns Christ wore while on the cross and the red berries symbolized the blood he shed.



### POINSETTIAS

A native Mexican plant, poinsettias were named after Joel R. Poinsett, U.S. ambassador to Mexico who brought the plant to America in 1828. Poinsettias were likely used by Mexican Franciscans in their 17th century Christmas celebrations. One legend has it that a young Mexican boy, on his way to visit the village Nativity scene, realized he had no gift for the Christ child. He gathered pretty green branches from along the road and brought them to the church. Though the other children mocked him, when the leaves were laid at the manger, a beautiful star-shaped flower appeared on each branch. The bright red petals, often mistaken for flowers, are actually the upper leaves of the plant.

# St. Matthew Christmas Tree Decorating

Students from St. Matthew School once again took part in decorating a Christmas tree down at Cathedral Square Park in Downtown Milwaukee. Home of "Jazz in the Park" and close to many great Milwaukee bars and restaurants, Cathedral Square Park transforms into a haven of Christmas trees and lights in November and December. Like Pere Marquette Park, Cathedral Square is a part of the annual Holiday Lights Festival that takes place between now and Sunday, January 2, 2011.

St. Matthew students spent months decorating ornaments for tree which once again highlighted recycling and re-using everyday items including lip tops and old plastic soda bottles. The fir tree has a long association with Christianity, it began in Germany almost 1,000 years ago when St. Boniface, who converted the German people to Christianity, was said to have come across a group of pagans worshipping an oak tree. In anger, St. Boniface is said to have cut down the oak tree and to his amazement a young fir tree sprung up from the roots of the oak tree. St. Boniface took this as a sign of the Christian faith. But it was not until the 16th century that fir trees

were brought indoors at Christmas time. You can see the St. Matthew tree through the end of the festival. Cathedral Square Park is located at 520 East Wells Street in Milwaukee. While there will be numerous trees in the park, the St. Matthew Tree is located almost directly across from the Cathedral, very close to the MCTS Bus Stop on the corner. Come out and see their creative decorative work and support the students of St. Matthew School!

— Robert Tabern



## St. Matthew Parish Buzz

Produced by the St. Matthew Communication Committee

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Submit Photos, Stories or Story Suggestions to the Communication Committee at [thebuzz@stmattoc.org](mailto:thebuzz@stmattoc.org) or 414-764-9617