

(continued from the front cover)

The crisis

The Magi set out again following the star, but at a certain point they no longer see it. So strong had their certainty been that the newborn King would be in the palace – a certainty that had momentarily dazzled their eyes to the point that they lost their way. But then, accepting the fact that they had been mistaken, they “convert” themselves, and the star reappears, guiding them toward their goal. This is a beautiful and important passage because it makes us understand that the drama of the human person is never that of falling, of making a mistake, but of giving up after falling. Like the Magi, who were searchers of truth, we sometimes or often risk allowing ourselves to be dazzled by our own convictions to the point of losing our way. Today, we are taught not to be afraid to question our own certainties and conclusions because a true “creature” knows how to accept their mistakes and continue their journey. Our hearts have great desires, they thirst for justice and truth, for joy and hope. To follow the star is to follow these same lofty, noble, just, beautiful desires that enter the heart and are capable of moving us through life, of setting us on our journey knowing how to face hardships, risks and defeats, just as the Magi did.

The encounter with the Child, the King

When our search is energized by truth, then we find what we are seeking, even if it comes from a “Child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger” (Lk. 2:12). This passage is interesting. It is not enough to “seek” if our hearts are not pure, if they are not free from prejudice, if they are not guided by sentiments of truth. “Herod wants to adore the Child, but we know that his desire was twisted (cf. Mt. 2:16: “Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men ... he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under”; Lk. 9:9: “He sought to see him”, he was curious because of Jesus’ miracles). Engulfed by fear and uncertainty, imprisoned so by power, Herod was not able to see in that Child what He really was, and so he allowed himself to be taken over by the fear that the Child was a dangerous competitor.

Epiphany manifests Jesus and our hearts

Epiphany not only manifests Jesus, the Son of God, but also reveals our hearts. It shows us that the Savior can be welcomed (as happened with the shepherds and the Magi) and rejected (as happened with King Herod). Let’s not hide the fact that there are aspects of “the magi” and aspects of “King Herod” in each of us. There’s a part of us already ready to set out on the journey, to know and understand, to grow and improve, to surpass ourselves. But there is also a Herod always ready to destroy our dreams and hopes. A Herod, always ready to massacre, lurks behind our desire for what is good, beautiful and right, not wanting us to find “the Child” who can change our lives. The Magi teach us that life is a journey and that we are invited to live it as Jesus did, while the Herods of this world delude and flatter us into believing that success and power are necessary in order to exist.

The gifts

Gold and incense recall the gifts of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, a reference we find in the Responsorial Psalm (Ps. 72). Gold represents Jesus’ kingship; incense, His divinity; myrrh, His humanity since it was a substance that was used to sprinkle over the bodies of the dead. The light of the star always leads to an act of adoration, of bowing before the mystery that has drawn near. It leads to giving, but even more, to self-giving. It is precisely this act of “self-giving” that stops many from allowing themselves to be attracted to Jesus because it leads to the fear of losing a position, comfort, security, privileges, thus hindering them from a change of life and conversion. (resource: Vatican News)



St. Catherine of Siena Mission

Humansville, Missouri

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: We remember those in our mission who are sick or unable to be with us: Robert Agee, Myrna Bressner, Sienna Cortes, Carol & Daniel Gorman, Paula Keller, Gary Kirkpatrick, Matthew Limbrick, Bobette & Phillip Owens, Annette Petrone, Tony Petrone, Dean Siemer, Henri Thibault, Logan Tillmon, Danny Vasquez. If you need prayers, please call Alice 754-8447, Paula 754-8067 or Fr. Scott 326-8764.

PCCW PRESIDENT: For information on meetings & projects contact Alice McIntosh, 417-754-8447.

**ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA MISSION
OUR GIFTS TO GOD**

12/28/2025

Env/Cks:	\$	40.00
Plate:		54.00
Total:	\$	94.00



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Bolivar, Missouri

January 4, 2026

“Our Catholic parish family welcomes all to share in Christ and the call to everlasting life through faith, prayer and fellowship.”

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

Epiphany in Greek means “manifestation”. In the West, the visit of the Magi is celebrated as the event through which the Lord was “manifested” to the pagans and, therefore, to the world. In the Eastern Church, the accent for this solemnity is on the Trinitarian “manifestation” during the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. While what is central on Christmas is the birth of the Child Jesus, on Epiphany, what is highlighted is that this poor and vulnerable Child is King and Messiah, the Lord of all the earth. With Epiphany, Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled, as can be discerned through the first reading: “Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come” (Is. 60:1ff). It’s as if the liturgy is saying – don’t cut yourselves off, don’t give up, don’t remain prisoners of your “convictions”, don’t be demoralized, react, “lift up your eyes”! Like the Magi, observe “the star” and you will find “the star, Jesus”.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.” Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way (Mt 2:1-12).

The Magi

The Magi “raise their eyes” and set out on a journey, going where it was logical to “seek” a king, in a palace. Their arrival creates a bit of turmoil, so much so that King Herod convokes the priests and pharisees, the experts in Sacred Scripture. They “know” that the Messiah would be born in “Bethlehem”. But their “knowing” does not go beyond. It has nothing to do with their lives, their experience. They remain stuck. They do not “get up”; they remain safe and comfortable in the palace. The Magi arrive from afar; the priests and pharisees are already near, yet they are blinded by their knowledge, by their certainties, by their privileged positions.... It seems that God reveals Himself to those who do not bask in their own light, to those who do not seek the limelight of notoriety.

(continued on the back page)

PARISH INFORMATION

Sacred Heart Catholic Church: 1405 W. Fair Play, Bolivar, 65613
417-326-5596 (office)

website: www.sacredheartbolivar.org

email: sheartbolivar@gmail.com

St. Catherine of Siena Mission: P.O. Box 42, Humansville, 65674
417-754-8825

PASTOR: The Very Rev. Fr. Scott M. Sunnenberg, 417-326-8764

PERMANENT DEACON: Rev. Mr. James Farrar, 417-818-0600
jfarrar@dioscrg.org

OFFICE MANAGER: Mary Rowley, 417-326-5596

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00a-4:00p

FAITH FORMATION COORDINATOR

Kindergarten-High School: Darlene Arendt, 417-298-6237

MUSIC MINISTRY COORDINATOR: Carol Divin,
417-326-6576

Practice for the Mass choirs are on the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the choir practice room.

PARISH COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN (PCCW)

Dana Landwehr, President, 660-223-2969 Meeting is the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Conference Room. We meet in the chapel at 5:30 p.m. for prayer. All women of the parish are invited.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS: Eric Shinault, 417-350-2686

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR: Ryan Skopec, 515-414-9257

ST. WENCESLAUS CATHOLIC CEMETERY

INFORMATION: Jim & Jane Otradovec, 417-327-5660

SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

Baptism: Please contact the Pastor for a meeting/class.

Marriage: Please contact the Pastor at least six months prior to the wedding for marriage prep classes.

OCIA Classes: Inquiry classes for adults who are interested in joining the Catholic Church contact Fr. Scott or Deacon Jim.

HEART TO HEART.....by V. Rev. Scott M. Sunnenberg

A LOOK AT LEO: *“If all of us, at every level, would stop accusing others and instead acknowledge our own faults, asking God for forgiveness, and if we would truly enter into the sufferings of others and stand in solidarity with the weak and the oppressed, then the world would change.” -Pope Leo IV, Christmas Day, 2025*

Dear Parishioners,

Sincere thanks to all who made our Christmas and New Year Liturgies so rich, reverent and beautifully renewing. Our sacristans, our readers, our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, our ushers and greeters, our servers, and our musicians, as well as those who simply volunteered where they saw a need brought blessing to each and every one of us in attendance. I also want to thank Mary Rowley for all the behind the scenes, preparation, publication, and administration that made it work.

A special word of gratitude for all who made January 1st, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (a Holy Day of Obligation), I stopped counting at 130, and there were quite a few more beyond that who came to kick off the new year in prayer and thanksgiving. You did this pastor’s heart good.

Please help us to welcome back our last summer’s seminarian intern, Mr. Daniel Dunn. Daniel will join us this weekend for Masses before heading back to Wisconsin to complete his final year in preparation for Diaconate Ordination sometime in the near future. Take a moment to greet Daniel after the Masses and renew that special Sacred Heart Church/St. Catherine Mission family welcome.

As we begin this new calendar year of Our Lord 2026, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will Consecrate the US to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, coinciding with America’s two hundred and fiftieth!!! Please consider attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion on the First Friday of each month (for at least 9 consecutive months) to honor Jesus and His Most Sacred Heart. Additionally, on each of these First Friday’s, offer prayers in reparation to “The Heart that has loved men so and is loved so little in return,” pray for the renewal of our nation, and offer this time as part of a New Year’s resolution to grow in holiness.

As we begin this new year, it’s a wonderful time to welcome New Parishioners, who have registered at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. We welcome the following families John and Casey Barnes (OCIA), Bob & Lori Mulrenin, and Cynthia Stockton. How happy we are that they have come to live, pray and work among us.

Blessings and peace to you,

Fr. Scott

7TH ANNUAL CATHOLIC MEN’S CONFERENCE: Is your life stuck in a rut? Is your faith feeling stale? Join hundreds of men for a day of life-changing motivation at the 7th annual Catholic Men’s Conference on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at Catholic High School. This year’s Keynote speaker, Marcel LeJeune, will help you take your faith to the next level! He has decades of experience leading men closer to Christ—so they can lead those around them to Christ. No matter where you are in your faith journey, you will gain the knowledge and motivation you need to be a true disciple. We’re building a culture of men who will transform our families & communities. Don’t miss this opportunity. Register for free today by visiting www.CatholicConference.men or scan the QR.



**ADORATION
TO THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT**

First Friday-7:00 AM-5:30 PM

Second & Third Wednesday-6:00 PM

Fourth Sunday-between Masses

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Wednesday-January 7

8:30a Mass Ann Day/SH

Thursday-January 8

10:00a Mass Danny Wolf+/SH

Friday-January 9

6:00p Mass John Loughner, Jr.+/SH

Saturday-January 10

4:00p Mass Parish Family/StC

6:00-6:15p Confession/SH

6:30p Mass Mary Lou Francka+/SH

Sunday-January 11

7:30-7:45a Confession/SH

8:00a Mass Sr. Natalie Hubbert+/SH

10:30a Mass Parish Family/SH

WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP

OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Sacred Heart Parish

12/28/2025

Env/Cks:	\$2,840.00
Plate:	312.00
Maintenance:	165.00
Seminarian/Retired Clergy:	5,040.00
Total:	\$8,357.00

December Online Donations

General Fund:	\$2,654.93
Seminarian/Retired Clergy	18.93
Maintenance:	71.85
Total of online December Donations:	\$2,745.71

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK OR HOMEBOUND: Dennie Austin, Rick Bigler, Kevin Breesawitz, Becky Briggs, Ron Dane, Carol Divin, Ken Divin, Lisa Doyle, Deacon Jim Farrar, Fred Letterman, Jackie Lore, Mary McGinnis, Kathleen Ricke, Sandra Samek, David Sandgren, Sue Shields, Mark Stanek, Jerry Sukovaty, Bev & Sam Swihart, and Fr. Pat Wissman. Those in skilled care facilities: Carol Francka, Judy Gailey, Shirley Harris, Ann Kathka, Don Keiter, Tim Smith, and Barbara Wood.

MILITARY PRAYER ROSTER: Please remember those in our parish families serving in the military: Airman Alex Ball, Airman Blane Breth, Airman Blake Gitner, Navy E3 Fireman Lucas Guynn, LCpl. Samuel Wick, and 2 Lt. Nick Yocom.



HELPING HANDS MINISTRY FOR PARISH SENIOR CITIZENS:

Do you have a need for a handyman at your home? The parish men’s Helping Hands ministry are willing to come do some light work for you. For information, call Dave at 509-230-3938 or John at 314-560-7771.

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH: Please join in welcoming to Sacred Heart, newly registered members Bob & Lori Mulrenin. Bob & Lori live near Pomme de Terre Lake at Hermitage. They are retired and enjoy being at the lake. Their previous parish was St. Francis de Sales in Lebanon. Bob & Lori are excited to be here at Sacred Heart. Please introduce yourselves and get to know them.

DIOCESAN EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS REGISTRATION OPENING NEXT WEEK:

In case you haven’t heard, August 15, 2026, in West Plains, MO at the civic center, our diocese will celebrate it’s 70th year by having an all day Eucharistic Congress. There are special keynote speakers who will be here; special activities for youth to be involved with, Mass, breakout sessions and many things for all of us to take part in. Registration for this is \$10 per person or \$45 per household. Do not wait to get registered for this. You can go online to find out more information by going to: <https://dioscg.org/diocesan-eucharistic-congress> Throughout 2026 there will be lots of special resources and things to take part in that will be leading up to this Diocesan Eucharistic Congress. Please be sure and read, read, read the things that will be emailed to you and put in our parish bulletin so that you are aware and can be part of this exciting time. **Registration opens January 12, 2026.**

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

First Friday: 6:30-6:50 p.m.

Saturday: 6:00 p.m.

Sunday: 7:30 a.m. at Sacred Heart *or by appointment.*