Saint Alphonsus

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

DECEMBER 25, 2024: THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

"For today in the city of David

a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord." (Lk 2:11)



Cover artwork by Emma C., 5th grader at Alphonsus Academy

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Mass Schedule

Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri, Sat	8:30 AM
Wed	6:00 PM
Sunday	9 AM, 11 AM, 12:30 (Spanish) and 5 PM

Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesday	6:30—7:30 PM

Confessions

Wednesday	6:30—7:30 PM
Saturday	11:00—12:00 PM

**Or call one of the priests for an appointment*

Worship

This Week's Readings

Tuesday: *Morning*: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29/Lk 1:67-79
Wednesday: *Vigil*: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 (2a)/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/
Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 *Night*: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 (Lk 2:11)/
Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14 *Dawn*: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20
Day: Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 (3c)/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Thursday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22
Friday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97: 1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Saturday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8/Mt 2:13-18
Next Sunday: 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10 (see 5a)/1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24/Lk 2:41-52

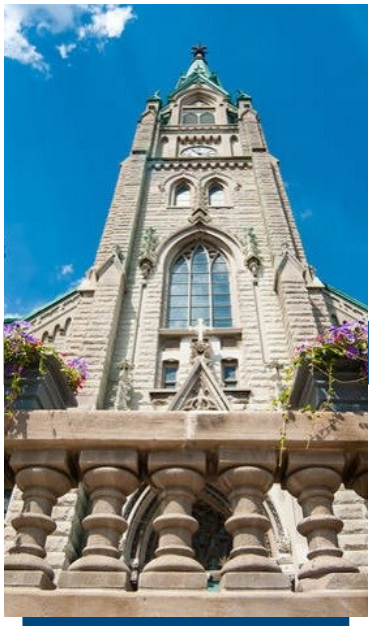
Please Pray for the Sick

Dorothy Bonds
Jamie Wallett
Monica Alexis Rios
Margaret Nichols
Tessa Sergent
Diane Mareci
William Ahearn
Emilia Hurtado
Michael and Elizabeth Velten
Fidel Mercado Chavez
David Birks
Celeste Soult
Michael Aldape
Janet Horvat
Frank G. Bauer
Al Corleone
Tracy Duda
Jacob Duda
Dorothy O'Brien
Ryan Meadow
Danny Browder
Carol Kania
Leslie Salimi
Jason Jamero
Rosemarie Cordero
Gary Masterson
Ramona Colon



Eucharistic Adoration: A Source for Peace:
Sometimes our weeks can be quite hectic, making it hard to find quiet time to pray. If this sounds familiar, join us for Mass on Wednesdays at 6 PM, followed by Eucharistic Adoration from 6:30-7:30. This can be a great way to re-center yourself in God and experience the peace that only Christ can give.

Men's Vespers– WED evening
Men of the parish are invited to attend our Communio prayer group each Wednesday from 8-9 PM in the rectory chapel (come to the rectory side door) It's a great way to take your spiritual life a step further as we enrich our knowledge of the faith, encourage each other in life's challenges, and grow in fortitude together. We chant the Liturgy of the Hours and share reflections on the upcoming Sunday gospel reading, followed by a social with refreshments, fellowship, and conversation. All men of the parish are invited. Questions or more info, contact James Morrow, jemseoul@hotmail.com



WEDDING
Brooke Langan
and
Robert Travers

Wedding Banns

II. Mary Grace Noteman and Patrick Doerr

Welcome Our Recently Baptized

Arlo Mercader Dayrit
Sebastian Lowery Bowen

MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, December 22
9:00 AM +Ed & Mary Gobat
11:00 AM +Jose Espina Jr.
12:30 PM +Dolores y Delfina Gutierrez
+Florentino Ornelas
5:00 PM The People of St. Alphonsus

Monday, December 23
8:30 AM +Katherine and Edward Dorsen

Tuesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)
8:30 AM The People of St. Alphonsus
4:00 PM +Tabitha Elle Sossei Shields
6:00 PM The People of St. Alphonsus
11:00 PM The People of St. Alphonsus

Wednesday, December 25 (Christmas Day)
9:00 AM The People of St. Alphonsus
11:00 AM The People of St. Alphonsus

Thursday, December 26
8:30 AM Nick and Grace Gilana (50th Wedding Ann.)

Friday, December 27
8:30 AM The People of St. Alphonsus

Saturday, December 28
8:30 AM +Marta Madrid Lucio

Sunday, December 29
9:00 AM +Ed & Mary Gobat
11:00 AM +Richard Meindl
12:30 PM The People of St. Alphonsus
5:00 PM +P. Andrew Fleming

Fr. Bauer's Christmas Message



While there may not be many sleigh bells ringing in a big city, there are sure to be doorbells ringing throughout our neighborhoods. Opening our homes to welcome and celebrate Christmas with family and friends for Christmas is a joyful element that we all look forward to. Young children everywhere eagerly anticipate the arrival of a visitor from the North Pole, that is, if they're confident of being on the Nice List. For me growing up, I wasn't always sure where my name fell, so I worked really hard during Advent to overcome faults and improve my odds. Usually my efforts paid off. Except once – but that's a story for another time.

As a kid with abundant energy and an overactive imagination, I wish I had known the guaranteed way to instantly move your name from one list to the other. A couple of times it actually happened serendipitously, but I didn't become aware of how or why until years later. So now my Christmas present to all the kids who find themselves in the same boat I often was – which is a present that parents can share in as well – I will now reveal the greatest of Christmas secrets. (As I write this, I feel like a magician about to reveal the answer to "how did he do that?") So then, how does a person instantly transfer his name from the Naughty List to the Nice List? The answer: in the Sacrament of Confession.

The answer to the greatest Christmas secret is found in the sacramental life of the Church. It works because the historical St. Nicholas was a Catholic bishop. He lived in the ancient city of Myra (in the southwest of modern day Turkey), and as a bishop, he himself would have absolved people of their sins and therefore has the utmost reverence and adherence to the sacraments. So when a priest grants absolution to someone in confession, not only are sins wiped away, names get wiped off the Naughty List!

This yuletide life-hack works for children and adults, too! And then children can be more confident that a mysterious visitor will come in the hiddenness of night and leave gifts, as if by some kind of secret magic.

While children focus on the presents and cookies they are to receive, especially after being on the Nice List, the spiritual celebration of Christmas – which is the real and most important part – invites us all to remember and reflect on Who it is that really comes to us in the hiddenness of Christmas night.

When Jesus was born and laid into the stillness of a manger on Christmas night, the divine Son of God, the Prince of Peace, has come to bring the gift of heavenly peace. And the world is forever changed. In the person of the Christchild, God now dwells on earth, and the gifts of heaven are accessible to us. To better receive them, we prepare our hearts, we cleanse our souls of sin, and we teach our children the real meaning of this night. While presents and magical visitors from snowy lands hidden up north are fun for children, when the Word became flesh and made His dwelling amongst us, it can be seen as the opening for us of the sacramental life of the Church. And in and through the gifts of the Sacraments that Christ ultimately gives us, we find forgiveness of sins, the fullness of life, and the destiny of joy that awaits us when the day comes that we make our home in heaven.

Support St. Alphonsus This Christmas!

This Christmas season, we express our gratitude for the generous gifts received this time of year. We are continuously overjoyed at how our parish and school families come together to help each other. While you are planning your seasonal giving, show your gratitude for God's blessings in your life by making a special donation to our annual Christmas Collection. Your spirit of giving demonstrates a deep understanding of our mission, as we witness together, the miracle of incarnation.

A huge thank you to those that are already giving online. Please consider making St. Alphonsus an extension of your home and family when contributing.

www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/526

You can also text Joyful to (773) 570-7600

News and Events

Baptisms at St. Alphonsus



Baptism is a fundamental sacrament for Christians. It is a sacrament of initiation that unites us to Christ's mystical body, incorporates us into the Church, and marks the beginning of the Christian journey. Without baptism we cannot participate in the full sacramental life of the Church. In the sacraments we concretely and most visibly encounter God's grace—life reunited with life.

If you are interested in having your child baptized at St. Alphonsus, please go to the Baptism page on our website, www.stalphonsuschicago.org/baptism, complete the form on there and our Sacraments Ministry coordinator will be in contact to secure a date.

For adult baptisms, contact Brooks Robinson at brobinson@stalphonsuschicago.church

Weddings at St. Alphonsus



The love between two people is a gift from God. The commitment you make to be together for the rest of your lives is sealed before the community and God during the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. If you are recently engaged and planning to get married (either at St. Alphonsus Church or out of town) please review the Marriage page on our website and reach out to weddings@stalphonsuschicago.church

Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion



Our parish is in need of faithful Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion. EMHC's should be fully initiated and practicing Catholics having received baptism, confirmation, and first Eucharist. If you would like to volunteer for this important ministry at Mass, please contact our pastor, Rev. Steven Bauer, sbauer@stalphonsuschicago.church

Faith In Action



Celebrating Our Lady of Guadalupe

Thank you for participating in the novena, the solemn Mass and for your donations for the roses and fiesta in honor of Our Blessed Mother.

Celebrando a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe













More News and Events



A Christmas Gift For You!!

Grab your FREE COPY of "***33 Days to Eucharistic Glory***" and join us for a Parish-wide Eucharistic Consecration from **January 1st-February 2nd**.

This Consecration is an invitation to dedicate yourself to God. It is an act of unconditional surrender to Jesus in the Eucharist, an opportunity to set aside our distractions and selfishness, and promise to faithfully respond to God's grace in our life.

Daily Reading on your own (only 10 minutes a day!) begins on January 1st.

Meetings in English will occur weekly on Sundays at 12 PM in Festival Hall beginning on January 5th.

The Consecration will be on Sunday, February 2nd. A small reception will follow. (*It is not required to attend every meeting to join us for the Consecration*.)

Start the New Year off right and journey closer to the Lord! Register with Emily Ember or Fr. Jesus Raya in the Parish Office.

Obtén tu COPIA GRATIS de "***33 días hacia la gloria eucarística***" y únete a nosotros para una Consagración Eucarística para toda la parroquia del **1 de Enero al 2 de Febrero.** Esta Consagración es una invitación para dedicarte a Dios de una forma intencional.

Lee el libro por tu cuenta, ¡solo 10 minutos al día! Comienza el 1 de enero. Tendremos reuniones de reflexión en español los viernes comenzando el 10 de enero 2025 a las 6:30pm en la rectoría parroquial. No es necesario asistir a todas las reuniones para la consagración. La Consagración será el domingo 2 de febrero. Más detalles por venir. ¡Comienza el Año Nuevo con el pie derecho y acércate al Señor! Inscríbase con Emily Ember o el P. Jesús Raya en la Oficina Parroquial.

Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25

The Nativity of the Lord

9:00 AM (bilingual English w/ German),
11:00 AM (bilingual English w/ Spanish)

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day

Masses to celebrate the **Feast of Mary, the Holy Mother of God**

Tuesday, December 31

8:30 AM, 4:00 PM (Vigil Mass)

Wednesday, January 1, 2025

10:00 AM (There is NO 6 PM Mass this Holiday)

If you are traveling to be with family or friends over Christmas, join us on January 5, the Feast of the Epiphany. The Midnight Mass program will be repeated at the 9 and 11 AM Masses.



Faith Formation



Psalms Series— Monday Evenings at 7 PM

He said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled.'" (Lk 24:44)

Our Young Adult Ministry is hosting a free series on the book of Psalms for young adults in their 20s and 30s to learn:

- how to establish a deeply personal dialogue with God through the Psalms
- how to meditate on the Psalms using lectio divina
- how the Psalms foretell the life and mission of Jesus
- ...and much more!

On Mondays at 7:00 PM-8:30 PM through January, we will watch video materials from Ascension Press presented by Jeff Cavins, Tim Gray, and Sarah Christmyer, followed by a group discussion. No preparation or supplies are needed, though there is an accompanying workbook if you would like to go deeper, which can be purchased from Ascension Press. ****We are taking a couple weeks off and will meet again on 1/6/25.***

If you are interested in attending, please contact Brendan at brendanmdaley@gmail.com

St. Alphonsus Men's Group

St. Alphonsus Men's Group meets Thursday nights to pray the liturgy of the hours, have fellowship, and to propose challenging topics to discuss.

When great conversations happen, synergy that creates connections and helps values be shared develops. *Proverbs 27:17* describes this as two iron tools being sharpened and made more effective. The same applies with friends coming into contact, sharpening and encouraging each other to greater service.

We meet every Thursday night at 7 PM in the rectory. Food and drinks provided. All men are welcome, with most men being in their 20s and 30s. Access can be gained at the west facing rectory door in the parking lot.

For questions or more information, contact Men's Group at our email, divineofficers@gmail.com



"Come to me all you are labored and burdened and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28

Walking With Purpose— Tuesday Women's Bible Study

God is meeting you right where you are. He is encouraging you to shift your perspective from your feelings, circumstances, and fears, and place them instead on the eternal truths He has revealed. Bring your angst, restless, and unsettled thoughts to Him. There is nothing He can't handle.

Walking With Purpose is a women's Bible Study group that meets on Tuesdays at St. Alphonsus. There is a morning session at 9:30 AM and an evening one at 6:30 PM. The group is on a short hiatus at the moment, and will meet again starting in late January 2025.



Young Adult Ministry

The Young Adult Ministry (YAM) is one of St. Alphonsus' most active parish groups! YAM is led by a volunteer board and is guided by Pastoral Associate, Brooks Robinson. Stated simply, the ministry's mission is to help one another participate in Christ's mission, that we, as young adult Catholics, may be effective disciples, evangelists, and agents of charity in all that we do. YAM provides many social, intellectual, service, and spiritual opportunities for growth. Members range in age from 21-39 years old.

Our YAM group is made up of 4 main pillars, Spiritual, Intellectual, Service, and Social.

Volunteer with UIC Newman Center in January!

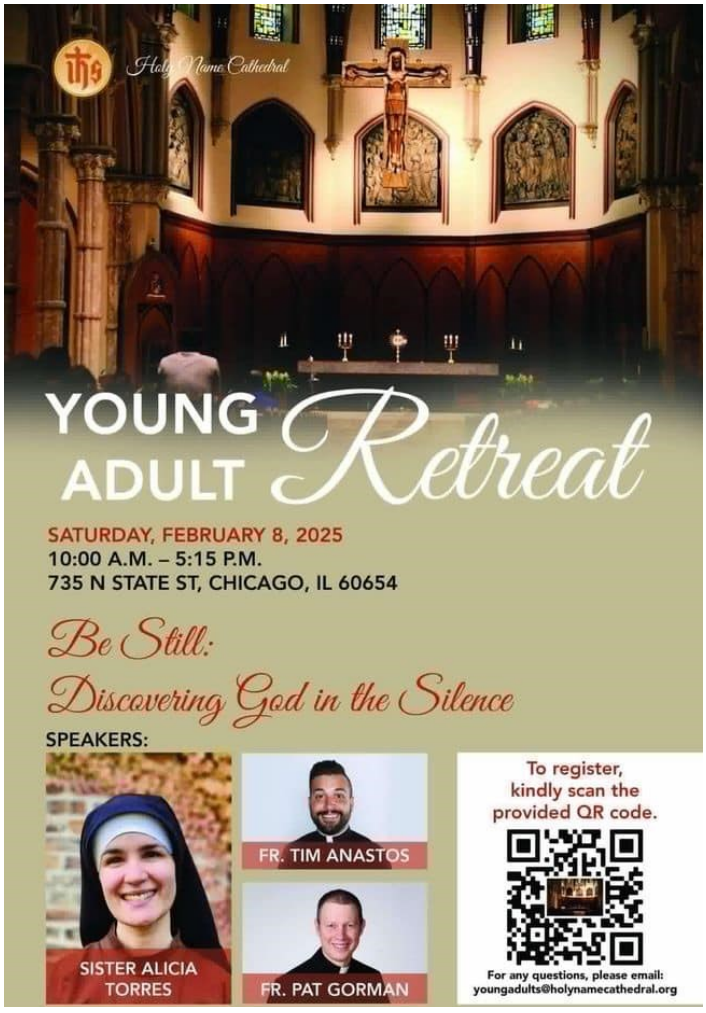
Join St. Alphonsus' Young Adult Ministry on January 11th in partnership with UIC's Newman Center! We will be helping out as part of their once a semester Deep Clean Day. Carpool will be arranged, leaving from St. Alphonsus. Event is 9 AM—Noon. A sign-up is available online at our YAM Facebook page.

Visit the St. Alphonsus YAM Facebook page, *www.facebook.com/AlphonsusYoungAdult* or contact the YAM board at *stalphonsusyam@gmail.com*

BE SOCIAL
BE SPIRITUAL
BE CHARITABLE
BE INTELLECTUAL
BE CATHOLIC



More Young Adult Events Around Chicago



Holy Name Retreat

All young adults in our faith community are encouraged to sign up for the retreat at Holy Name Cathedral on Saturday, February 8, 2025. There are some great speakers, (including former Associate Pastor at St. Alphonsus, Fr. Patrick Gorman) and early registration is just $25 until Jan. 5; $35 after.
Visit https://holyname.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/618/responses/new

Young Catholic Professionals

YOUNG CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS
Working in Witness for Christ™

There is an Executive Speaker series on Tuesday, January 7 at The National Shrine of Saint Frances Cabrini, 2520 N. Lakeview Ave. The topic is ***Generosity in the Workplace: Giving From The Heart***. This session will be open to non-members. Learn more and register at ycp.glueup.com/org/ycpchicago/events/

Catholic Sport Leagues

CSL has a few awesome events coming in 2025! Join in a brand new Euchre tournament, one night only on Thursday, Jan. 23 at Holy Name Cathedral, 735 N. State St., and their annual indoor volleyball league, held here at St. Alphonsus gym on Thursday evenings from February 20 to April 10. Register NOW for Early Bird pricing before entry fee increases. Visit catholicsportsleagues.com

So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

Luke 2:16–19

Pondering the Birth of Christ

Merry Christmas! Our Advent preparations have been completed, and we are now invited by our Lord to enter into the glorious celebration of His birth!

How well do you understand the awe-inspiring mystery of Christmas? How fully do you comprehend the significance of God becoming a human, born of a virgin? Though many are quite familiar with the beautiful and humble story of the birth of the Savior of the World, that familiarity can have the surprising negative effect of keeping our intellect from deeply probing the depths of the meaning of what we celebrate.

Notice the last line of the Gospel passage quoted above: "And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." What a beautiful line to ponder this Christmas day. Mother Mary was the one person who would have understood the mystery of the birth of her Son, the Son of God, the Savior of the World, far more deeply than anyone else. It was to her that the Archangel Gabriel appeared, announcing her pregnancy and His birth. It was her who carried her Son, the Son of God, in her Immaculate womb for nine months. It was to her that Elizabeth, her cousin, cried out, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42). It was Mary who was the Immaculate Conception, the one who was preserved from all sin throughout her life. And it was her who gave birth to this Child, carried Him in her arms and nursed Him at her breast. Our Blessed Mother, more than any other, understood the incredible event that had taken place in her life.

But, again, the Gospel above says that "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." One thing this tells us is that even Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of God, needed time to ponder, reflect and savor this most holy mystery. She never doubted, but her faith continually deepened, and her heart pondered the unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation.



Another thing this tells us is that there is no end to the depth of the "pondering" to which we must commit ourselves if we want to enter more deeply into the mystery of the birth of the Son of God. Reading the story, setting up a nativity scene, sharing Christmas cards, attending Mass and the like are central to a holy celebration of Christmas. But "pondering" and "reflecting," especially during prayer and especially at the Christmas Mass, will have the effect of drawing us ever deeper into this Mystery of our Faith.

Reflect, today, with our Blessed Mother. Ponder the Incarnation. Place yourself into the scene that first Christmas. Hear the sounds of the town. Smell the smells of the stable. Watch as the shepherds come forth in adoration. And enter the mystery more fully, acknowledging that the more you know about the mystery of Christmas, the more you know how little you actually know and understand. But that humble realization is the first step to a deeper understanding of what we celebrate this day.

Lord, I gaze at the wonder of Your birth. You Who are God, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, God from God and Light from Light, became one of us, a humble child, born of a virgin and laid in a manger. Help me to ponder this glorious event, to reflect upon the mystery with awe and to more fully grasp the meaning of what You have done for us. I thank You, dear Lord, for this glorious celebration of Your birth into the world. Jesus, I trust in You.







JOIN THE ALPHONSUS FAMILY!

APPLY FOR 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR NOW!

LEARN MORE

At Alphonsus, we offer our students a rigorous academics, supported by an arts-integrated curriculum, within a supportive Catholic community.

Please join us to discuss important application information, make introductions, and tour the school.

OPEN HOUSE DATES

- Monday, January 13, 2025 at 9am
- Sunday, January 26, 2025 at 10:30am (immediately following the 9am Mass led by our school choir to kick off Catholic Schools Week)

AACA | ALPHONSUS ACADEMY & Center for the Arts

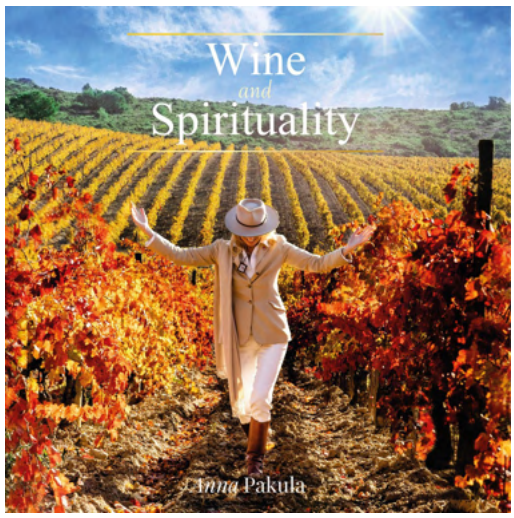
Register Now!

Open Houses are designed for adults and require advance registration for security purposes. We also invite families to schedule private tours to better suit their needs. We look forward to meeting you!

Reach out to our Director of Admissions for more information:

Madeleine Durkin
mdurkin@alphonsusacademy.org

Wine and Spirituality



A Perfect Gift of Wisdom from Our Creator and His Creation—the Vineyards

This Christmas, give the gift of inspiration with ***Wine and Spirituality*** (www.wineandspirituality.com), a beautifully crafted book that celebrates the harmony between the art of winemaking and wisdom from the Bible.

Written by international wine consultant **Anna Pakula**, this work combines over 25 years of experience in vineyards worldwide with profound Biblical insights. Featuring timeless quotes from Scripture in six languages and stunning photography, ***Wine and Spirituality*** takes readers on a reflective journey through the seasons of winemaking—drawing a powerful parallel with our own spiritual growth.

Why Choose ***Wine and Spirituality***?

Breathtaking Photography: A visual celebration of vineyards and the art winemaking captured by heart and soul
Spiritual Wisdom: Thoughtful Biblical quotes designed for daily inspiration, reflection, and contemplation.
A Timeless Gift: Perfect for wine lovers, spiritual seekers, and anyone cherishing meaningful moments of faith.

Whether for personal contemplation or as a thoughtful gift, ***Wine and Spirituality*** invites you to reconnect with the natural gifts of God and find peace, harmony, and inspiration in every page.
Order Your Copy Today!

Price: ~~$130~~ $100 special Christmas offer! (Includes a donation to support St. Alphonsus Church)

Available for purchase at St. Alphonsus' Rectory or online at www.givecentral.org/customizable-online-giving/39/event/42322
Questions? Contact Fr. Jesus Raya, jraya@stalphonsuschicago.church
More information on the author, Anna Pakula,
email: annapakula@mac.com or WhatsApp +48 513 725 233 website: www.wineandspirituality.com

The Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary is now at St. Alphonsus! The Legion of Mary is a lay apostolic association of Catholics who, serve the Church and their neighbor on a voluntary basis. The Legion sees as its priority the spiritual and social welfare of each individual. The members participate in the life of the parish through volunteering and evangelizing activities sponsored by the parish.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A LEGIONARY?

Meetings in English will take place on Fridays, starting Jan. 10, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. in the Rectory

For more information, please contact the parish office at 773-525-0709



La Legión de María

La Legión de María ya esta en San Alfonso! La Legión de María es una asociación apostólica laica de católicos que sirven a la Iglesia y al prójimo de forma voluntaria. La Legión considera como prioridad el bienestar espiritual y social de cada individuo. Los miembros participan en la vida parroquial a través de actividades de voluntariado y evangelización patrocinadas por la parroquia.

¿INTERESADO EN SER LEGIONARIO?

Las reuniones en español se llevan a cabo los lunes a las 6:00 P.M. en la Rectoría

Para obtener más información, comuníquese a la rectoría parroquia al 773-525-0709

What the Church Teaches about the Incarnation

Christ enables us to live in him all that he himself lived, and he lives it in us. "By his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each (person)." We are called only to become one with him, for he enables us as the members of his Body to share in what he lived. (*Catechism,* §521)

Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us. Christmas is the mystery of this "marvelous exchange": *O marvelous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity.* (*Catechism,* §526)

Even though Christmas was not celebrated in the first centuries of Christianity, the mystery that it celebrates was always at the forefront of the church's belief. As the gospel of John begins, *...the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us....* This taking on of our flesh is called the "Incarnation." This is one of the central Christian truths. There are questions about it that we can never answer. At the same time, when we reflect upon this mystery, we can discover some truths about God and about humanity.

First, we discover something essentially true about God. God so loves humanity, that God is willing to become one with humanity. (See John 3:16) The Incarnation was one moment in history, but it doesn't end there. God's desire to bring each human being into unity with God is ongoing. We are all invited to be part of the church, the Body of Christ, where we can share in God's life with us. We begin to have a share in the holiness of God, starting on the journey to our salvation and destiny with God.

Second, we discover something about humanity. Each human person has a dignity and worth that cannot be discounted. We are made in God's image, which does not mean that we physically look like God. It means that we have reflected in our being the powers to imagine, to create, to love. God is infinite, we are finite. Our powers are not equal to God's, but they reflect God's image within us. We are made in God's image, and in the person of Jesus, God took on our flesh. Our very being is what God assumes and makes holy. Our flesh is not to be discarded or ignored. It is the ground for holiness. This is true of every person.

Jesus did not pretend to live as a human. He had to be toilet trained, he felt hunger and cold, he probably became ill, he bled and he died. He experienced all the possibilities of human life, except sin. He thought with a human mind. He was and is the Son of God, but he did not lie in the manger humming a Bach cantata or contemplating the theory of relativity. He had to learn to walk, to talk, to obey his parents.

When we celebrate Jesus' birth, we remind ourselves that he began life as we did, asleep in his mother's arms, waking to be fed. The most elemental aspects of our humanity are not foreign to God. God knows, intimately, every aspect of what it means to live and feel as a human.

The miracle of "God with us" does not end with the Incarnation, however. The miracle continues in us as we accept God's gracious gift in Christ and move toward our destiny to be united with God's holiness.

For more information, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §470-478,512-534.

Stewardship at St. Alphonsus



Stewardship is a spirituality, a way of life, a response in gratitude to God for what has been give to us. It is intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure. As stewards we receive the gifts of God with gratitude, cultivate them responsibly and share them lovingly with others, all the while standing before the Lord in a spirit of accountability.

As you reflect upon the ways you return your gifts, please consider the time and talent you might have to offer our parish. A host of opportunities are waiting for you here at St. Alphonsus.

In January, we turn our focus towards ushers. Ushers are the official host of the weekend liturgies. By their presence, conversation and actions, they make all who come for worship at St. Alphonsus feel welcome! The hospitality ushers provide is a visible presence of the stewardship of time and talent.

If you are interested in helping out and becoming an usher, please contact John Meindl, jmeindl66@gmail.com

Safe Families for Children

Volunteer with Safe Families for Children!

When a single parent experiences a crisis (hospitalization, loss of housing, unemployment, etc.) and has no support system to lean on for childcare, they can call Safe Families for Children.



Safe Families works by connecting families in crisis with compassionate, background-checked families to care for their children until the parent(s) are back on their feet.

Apply to be a "Host Family" or "Family Friend" today!
https://sfcms.net/apply/

Learn more at safe-families.org or contact us at safefamiliesstals@gmail.com

At the Athenaeum

For over 100 years, the Athenaeum Theatre has stood as a cornerstone in the Lakeview neighborhood. It is Chicago's oldest continuously operating Off-Loop theatre. Management continues to bring in wide and varied lineups of talent in the performing arts ranging from stage actors, dancers, musicians, comedians, and podcast/ YouTube sensations. At The Athenaeum Center for Thought and Culture, we believe that beauty has the capacity to build up culture, transform society, and change lives. We hope to help you contemplate, encounter, and delight in beauty.

Check out all upcoming shows at the Athenaeum Center for Thought and Culture, visit athenaeumcenter.org/events/

Why Register at a Parish?

- It is a **sign of commitment and support to the life of a parish community** and indicates willingness to **belong to our parish family**.
- Our Parish Staff will have the basic information needed to **communicate with individual families, especially in times of emergency.**
- Every Catholic needs to have their **sacramental information documented**. Copies of one's Baptismal, First Communion, Confirmation, and Marriage records are required at various times in our life.
- Families that enroll their children in **our Parish School or Religious Education Program** should be registered and active in the parish, especially if they intend to have their children receive the Sacraments.
- Families are able to receive **important information about the parish** that often comes through direct mailing.
- For **Godparents**, it is required to provide information stating active parish registration, practice of faith and ongoing support to the overall life of the parish.

Parish Mailing list is **only used for church purposes and never shared with businesses or other organizations.

Joining St. Alphonsus Parish

St. Alphonsus welcomes all community members on their faith journey! Just moved in the area? Coming back to practicing our Catholic faith? You will want to learn about all the events going on at our parish. If you are not receiving our weekly parish newsletter in your email, contact Mario Serrano at mserrano@stalphonsuschicago.church
You can officially register to join the parish at www.stalphonsuschicago.org/visitors

Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus are the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. Dedicated to the principles of Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. The Knights organize and participate in numerous charitable activities each year that are designed to benefit their parish communities, to help their brother Knights grow deeper in their faith as Catholic men, and to serve the needy and less fortunate in the world.

The St. Alphonsus Council has a strong group of motivated Knights from all ages and walks of life, w/ our numbers over 100 strong and growing. Our council's main goals are: to rally the Catholic men in our community to a common and noble cause, to assist and defend our church, to serve our community, to encourage growth in faith and prayer in ourselves and in our friends and families, to become better men and fathers, and finally to meet like-minded men that share our same values and belief that you can be a man of the world while still having Christ at the center of your life.

We are always looking for new members, and would welcome the practicing Catholic men of the parish and surrounding community to join our ranks. There is usually a social following our meetings, which is open to all prospective members. To find out more information about the Knights of Columbus at St. Alphonsus, or to apply for membership, feel free to contact parishioner, Ray San Agustin at raysanagustin15158@gmail.com or visit www.stalphonsusknights.com

Our next meeting will be on Monday, January 6 at 7:00 PM!

A Christmas Message From Our Grand Knight

Dear Brother Knights,

As we approach this blessed Christmas season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible spirit of Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism that each of you brings to our Council. In a year that has been filled with both challenges and triumphs, your dedication to our mission and to each other has been a beacon of hope and joy.

Christmas is a time for coming together, for reflecting on the gifts we've received, and for sharing those gifts with others. I am deeply grateful for the love and support that each of you offers, not just to our Council but to the greater community. Your selflessness, whether in service to others or in the quiet moments of prayer and reflection, is a true testament to the heart of what it means to be a Knight.

As we gather with family and friends this season, may we remember the great gift of Christ's birth, a gift that calls us to serve, to love, and to bring light into the world. Let us continue to build on the legacy of our Order, striving to make a difference in the lives of those around us, sharing the peace and joy that comes from Christ.

From my heart to yours, I wish you and your families a Christmas filled with blessings, joy, and the warmth of His love. May this holy season bring you peace and strength, and may the New Year bring continued opportunities for us to grow in faith and fellowship.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and for being a true example of what it means to be a Knight. As always, I am honored to serve alongside each of you.

God bless you all, and Merry Christmas!

In Christ and Our Lady,
Ray C. San Agustin
Grand Knight – St. Alphonsus Knights of Columbus

Vivat Jesus

Dear Sisters and Brothers,



In this holy season of Christmas, words from the Book of Wisdom echo in our hearts: *For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy almighty Word leapt down from Heaven from Thy royal throne, as a fierce conqueror into the midst of the land of destruction.* (Wisdom 18:15).



We have many reasons to think of our world as "the land of destruction." Today, so many people across the globe suffer the ravages of war and violence, the burden of illness, crushing poverty and displacement, and natural disasters that are often weather related.

Our faith affirms that the Eternal Word of the Father took our flesh, shared our human condition in all its troubled dimensions, and then as "a fierce conqueror" lifted us up into new life. This mystery at the center of our faith gives us renewed hope and encouragement as we make our pilgrim way in this wounded world. Indeed, across the coming Holy Year, we celebrate the hope that only the Lord in his goodness can give us. It is hope, Saint Paul tells us, that *will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us*. (Romans 5:5)

As you gather with family and friends in this holy season, I will pray for you and for a renewal of your hope. May the upcoming Holy Year with its theme ***Pilgrims of Hope*** be an opportunity for all of us to learn how to be signs and instruments of hope for our struggling and burdened world.

As I celebrate the Eucharist in this holy season, I will ask the Lord to help you and your loved ones to cling to his word of promise that is the true source of our hope.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago





Low Gluten Hosts Available



If you are allergic to wheat or have celiac disease, or for any reason can't tolerate gluten, we have hosts available for you. Low gluten hosts are available at every Mass, even daily Masses.
To receive a low gluten host at Mass, all you have to do is get in the Communion line for the celebrant, and then just point to the little ciborium that the priest sets on the communion rail.

These hosts have 0.01% gluten. We can provide further information about their content upon request.

Contact

Sacramental Information

Contact our parish office at (773) 525-0709 for information regarding celebrating sacraments including Baptisms (infant and adult), Reconciliation (confession), Eucharist (Communion), Confirmation, Marriage, Anointing of the Sick. For information regarding Funerals, please first contact the funeral director of your choice to begin making arrangements.

How to Offer a Mass Intention

Have you ever noticed that every Mass said here at St. Alphonsus is offered for a special intention? The entire congregation prays for that intention during the petitions (Prayers of the Faithful) when we say, "For those who have died, and for the intention of this Mass: (named intention)"

You can make a Mass Intention request here. Masses are often offered for family, friends and relatives that have died. Praying for the dead is a Spiritual Work of Mercy. Offering a Mass for someone that has died is an especially comforting gesture to the family. Mass can also be offered to commemorate joyful occasions and to give thanks to God for blessings received.

The customary offering for a Mass is $15. However, any amount that you would like to offer is acceptable. You can request Masses by visiting the Parish Office during office hours or calling the Parish Office at (773) 525-0709.

You can ***register in the parish*** by coming to the rectory office or going online at *www.stalphonsuschicago.org*. The advantage to registering is that we know who you are and can better plan our programs by knowing whom we serve.

Want *to find out what is happening in the young adult community?* Join the St. Al's Young Adult Listserv. We send out monthly emails to let people know about our upcoming events. To register for the listserv, contact *stalphonsusyam@gmail.com*

The ***Knights of Columbus*** are the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. For more information, visit *www.stalphonsusknights.com*

St. Alphonsus Social Media

Choose to participate in meaningful engagement! Having an attitude of engagement challenges us to love our digital neighbor as ourselves. You can find St. Alphonsus' Facebook and Instagram by going to the parish website and clicking the icons at the footer of the page.

Directory

Parish Office

1429 W Wellington Ave, Chicago, IL 60657-4121
(P): 773-525-0709 |
www.stalphonsuschicago.org
parish@stalphonsuschicago.church

Parish Office Hours:

9:00 AM— 5:00 PM Mon, Wed, Fri
9:00 AM— 7:30 PM Tues, Thur

School Office

1439 W Wellington Ave, Chicago, IL 60657-4121
(P): 773-892-1397 |
www.alphonsusacademy.org
info@alphonsusacademy.org

School Office Hours:

8:00 AM– 3:00 PM

Staff

Parish Staff

Rev. Steven Bauer, Pastor
Rev. Jesús (Chuy) Raya, Associate Pastor
Brooks Robinson, Pastoral Associate
Emily Ember, Coordinator of RE/Evangelization
Brian Bloye, Director of Music and Organist
Daniel Szymanski, Director of Operations
Mario Serrano, Parish Office Manager
Kathryn Kibler, Sacrament Ministry Coordinator/Parish Secretary

School Staff

Gerit McAllister, Principal
Angela Kladis, Assistant Principal
Madeleine Durkin, Director of Admissions
Kim Wallett, Secretary
Janin Silva, Administrative Assistant