



HOLY NAME OF MARY

CATHOLIC CHAPEL



WE ARE THE DIVERSE PEOPLE OF GOD WALKING
IN THE AFFIRMING LOVE OF THE FRUIT OF
MARY'S WOMB, JESUS CHRIST!  



Greetings from our Pastor

Dear Friends & Neighbors,

Thank you for picking up this booklet about our parish, Holy Name of Mary Catholic Chapel. **Many are surprised by the diversity found within the Catholic faith.** By the end of this booklet, you'll have a crash course on our history and role in the Universal Church. Our parish council is grateful to offer an inclusive expression of Catholicism here in the Endless Mountains and worldwide through our online ministry. Join us for Holy Mass in downtown Towanda or online!

We believe there's room for everyone in the family of God, regardless of your orientation, gender identity, marital status, or where you are on your faith journey. As **diverse** people of God, let's join the Blessed Mother in saying "Yes" and walk in the **affirming** love of her son, Jesus.

Our Media Director and my spouse, Anthony, along with our son, are delighted you stopped by and look forward to praying with you. My associate pastor, Father William, who resides just outside of Lourdes, France, is also available to support you via email and video chat.

Here's the bottom line: I love people, and I love Jesus and Mary. Saint Maximilian Kolbe, a martyr of the Holocaust, said, **"Never be afraid of loving Mary too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did."** Likewise, Jesus loves us more than we can imagine. Please let me know how I can minister to you and your loved ones.

Your servant in Christ,

Father Dan +

Learn more about Holy Name of Mary Chapel!

What is our mission?

Our mission is to embrace the diverse community of God, guided by the love embodied in the fruit of the Virgin Mary's womb, Jesus Christ.

What is our statement of inclusion?

All baptized individuals are warmly invited to participate fully in our parish, regardless of race, nationality, age, gender identity, sexuality, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation. If you're interested in baptism, please speak with our inclusive priests. No one who seeks God, in humility, will be turned away from the Blessed Sacrament. **We welcome and affirm LGBTQIA+ people!**

Do we respect freedom of conscience?

Absolutely! We affirm the right of individuals to act according to their conscience and support them in making personal moral and faith decisions. We believe health and reproductive choices should be made by individuals and medical professionals. We affirm the right of all couples practicing sacrificial love to seek the Church's blessing on their marriage and recognize that some marriages may need to end for the safety and wellbeing of those involved. We never withhold the Eucharist nor require burdensome and expensive annulments.

How do we worship?

Our primary liturgy follows the Third Edition Roman Rite (2011), fostering unity among American Catholics. We also offer the Tridentine Liturgy (Latin Mass) in English. Devotions like novenas, the Holy Rosary, relic veneration, and Eucharistic Adoration are common. You may notice non-gendered or inclusive language. Sunday Masses may be replaced by feasts, and priests may serve the Mass toward the people (versus populum) or toward a high altar (ad orientem).

What do we believe?

Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again!

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Romans 10:9

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

We believe God is love and that compels our love for others!

Are our sacraments valid?

Yes, both Old Roman Catholicism and the Society of Mercy maintain Apostolic Succession and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, ensuring the validity of our sacraments, though some may be deemed illicit (without permission) by Roman Catholic Canon Law.* We encourage all Christians to follow their well-formed conscience and respect their denomination's communion norms.

Are we a Roman Catholic parish?

No, we are an independent parish within the Old Roman Catholic tradition served by priests of the Society of Mercy. We share many similarities with the Roman Catholic Church and hope for eventual unity, but we recognize and respect our differences, particularly regarding sexuality, gender, divorce, and doctrinal development.

What do official Roman Catholic documents say about your tradition and place in the Church?

"Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church, since they do not accept the Catholic doctrine of the Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church."*

**Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Dominus Iesus, 17.*

Put simply, while we lack full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, our sacraments are valid and we are a true Church.

What is the history of Old Roman Catholicism?

In 1908, Arnold Harris Mathew, a Roman Catholic priest, was consecrated as Bishop for Great Britain by Archbishop Gul of the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht. He established an Old Catholic community in Great Britain and declared autonomy in 1910, splitting from Utrecht due to its discontinuation of traditional Catholic practices. This new body, the "Old Roman Catholic Church," emphasized its Roman Catholic heritage while maintaining Apostolic Succession from the Old Catholics of Utrecht. In 1911, it unified with the Orthodox Patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria, becoming an autocephalous (independently governed) church.

Old Roman Catholicism follows the ancient Ultrajectine tradition, ensuring local jurisdictional control, unlike Roman Catholicism's Ultramontanism tradition which centralizes power in the papacy.

What is the Society of Mercy?

The Society of Mercy is a group of validly ordained Old Roman Catholic clergy committed to upholding essential dogmatic beliefs, maintaining local ecclesiastical autonomy, reverently administering sacraments, and providing compassionate care to those in need. Clergy members serve in roles such as parish priests, educators, chaplains, and social service workers.

Our bishop and superior general is The Most Reverend William Myers.

Learn more about the Society of Mercy at www.ssmercy.org.

Do we honor the Pope?

Yes! We respect the Pope as the Bishop of Rome and First Among Equals. However, we do not accept universal papal jurisdiction as understood by Roman Catholics, which departs from early church practices and the ecclesiology of Eastern Orthodoxy, Coptic Orthodoxy, Old Catholicism, and Old Roman Catholicism. We include prayers for the Pope in every Mass, recognizing his role as Patriarch of the West, and acknowledge his right to promulgate liturgy and establish feasts for the Universal Church.

Do you encourage folks to leave their church?

We focus on building the Kingdom of God, not relocating it. **We pray that everyone finds refuge in their parish and religious experience.** We encourage individuals to find a local Eucharistic community where they are valued, loved, and can receive the Blessed Sacrament without fear or burden. Following Pope Francis' guidance to diverse Catholics to "support and encourage one another, especially at the level of parishes and local communities," we give thanks for our Roman Catholic siblings and their ministries. However, if someone cannot find acceptance and affirmation in their religious community, we welcome them with open arms into our Christian tradition.

How special is the Blessed Mother to us?

The Blessed Virgin Mary is our patron saint and namesake because of her role as mother of Jesus, her intercessory grace in heaven, and her enduring presence as our loving mother given to us at the Cross. The early church recognized Mary's grace, as foretold in Genesis 3:15. Our Catechism of Christian Doctrine explains, "Mary is Mother of God because Jesus Christ, her son, who was born of her as man, is not only man, but is also truly God." We celebrate our Patronal Feast on September 8th, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and our Titular Feast on September 12th, the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary. In Old Roman Catholicism, the traditions of Mary's Immaculate Conception and Assumption are matters of pious belief and liturgical celebration, not dogma necessary for salvation. **We love Our Lady!**

What sacraments do you offer?

We honor the traditional seven sacraments, instituted by Jesus Christ, as visible signs of inward grace that nourish our souls.

Baptism initiates us into the Body of Christ through immersion or the pouring of water, with the words "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." It is offered to all ages, following Christ's command to welcome the little ones.

Confirmation grants the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, using the Oil of Chrism, with the words "be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." It may be administered immediately after baptism, following ancient tradition, or a later time by the bishop or priest.

Eucharist invites us to partake of the true Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine. Celebrated at Mass, it's our supreme act of thanksgiving and sacrifice.

Confession renews our baptismal grace and seeks God's forgiveness in the presence of a priest, who says "I absolve you of your sins, in the

Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." While not mandatory, it's recommended yearly before Easter or when burdened.

Anointing of the Sick offers healing and peace through laying on of hands, prayers, and the Oil of the Infirm. It's available to anyone in need of healing, regardless of imminent danger.

Marriage blesses loving couples who commit to vows and spousal life. Proper preparation and intention are crucial, with both parties of legal age. Marriage is to demonstrate the love Jesus has for the Church.

Holy Orders appoint elected members of the Church as deacons, priests, or bishops, to serve the people of God.

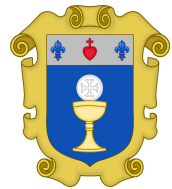
What if I still have more questions or need sacraments?

We would be happy to chat with you about God's love, how we understand our inclusive Catholic faith, or schedule the sacraments you need, just talk to our priests. **We aren't here to judge, just to love.**



HOLY NAME OF MARY

CATHOLIC CHAPEL



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Pray with us Sundays on Facebook & YouTube [@holynamemary](#)
Join us at 11:30AM on 2nd and 4th Sundays for Holy Mass In-person!

Served by priests of the Society of Mercy, not under papal jurisdiction.