



## *St. James International Food Festival (IFF)*

The first St. James International Food Festival (IFF) was held in 2009 to help raise awareness of our Catholic community in Searcy and to raise funds to pay for the new church. Parishioners cooked and donated food from their native countries and served samples to guests. This was a successful start to what would become an annual event to raise funds for building projects and promote a Catholic presence in the community. Each year the hall is decorated with flags from various countries and native cuisine is prepared by our parishioners. In earlier years a silent auction was part of the event. In the last few years, we have replaced the silent auction with a huge raffle of various valuable prizes.

On October 3, 2026, we will host our 16<sup>th</sup> annual IFF and we will raffle off cash prizes of \$2500, \$1500 and \$1000 along with a few smaller prizes. Raffle tickets will be 1 for \$5 or 5 tickets for \$20. We are asking all parishioners to help sell raffle tickets between now and October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sell them at work, to your family, to your friends etc. The Meal Ticket gets one into the event where you can sample the various food. Meal tickets are \$20 cash or \$22 if paying by credit card.

The other huge component of the IFF is the various cuisines made by our parishioners. We have had countries from 5 of the 7 continents represented. In a few weeks there will be a list of the countries where you may sign up to prepare food. If you love Italian food but are not from Italy, you can still make your favorite Italian dish. We need a lot of prepared food.

This is a great fund raiser and a way to get to know more people in our church community. It takes a lot of help to put this together. We need servers, set up crew, clean up crew, people to cook their favorite cuisine, people selling meal tickets, people putting raffle tickets in envelopes to hand out, people selling raffle tickets, people collecting the raffle money after each weekend Mass, etc. We will also appreciate any donations toward the prizes. Please consider attending our next IFF planning meeting on Tuesday July 28. If you have any questions, you may contact Theresa Gilliam 501-230-7515 and if I can't help you, I will find someone who can. Thank you and let's make this the best IFF ever!!