

JANUARY 9, 2022

# SAINT MICHAEL ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

4 CHURCH STREET · NETCONG, NJ 07857

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## TEAM POSITIVE

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## SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Saturday: 5:00 pm

Sunday: 7:00, 9:30, 11:30 am (*in English*)

Misa en Español todos los Domingos: 1:30 pm

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## WEEKDAYS

Weekdays: 10:00 am

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## SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 4:00 - 4:30 pm    Monday: 6:30 - 7:00 pm

(no Monday reconciliation during June, July or August)

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**Phone:** 973-347-0032

**Website:** [www.stmichaelnetcong.org](http://www.stmichaelnetcong.org)

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*Welcome to our Church*

The Church of Saint Michael  
January 9, 2022  
Baptism of The Lord



Please remember in your prayers those who have died.

Please remember in your prayers the sick of our parish.

Weekly Memorial

Altar Bread & Wine: For All Deceased Parishioners

Readings for the week

The Baptism of the Lord

**Sunday**

Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Is 40:1-5, 9-11;  
Acts 10:34-38 or Ti 2:11-14, 3:4-7;  
Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

**Monday**

1 Sm 1:1-8; Mk 1:14-20

**Tuesday**

1 Sm 1:9-20; Mk 1:21-28

**Wednesday**

1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20; Mk 1:29-39

**Thursday**

1 Sm 4:1-11; Mk 1:40-45

**Friday**

1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a; Mk 2:1-12

**Saturday**

1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19, 10:1; Mk 2:13-17

Mass Intentions for the Week

**Saturday, January 8, 2022**

10am Special Intention

5pm Theresa Donnarumma, Marie Vendola

**Sunday, January 9, 2022**

7am Special Intention

9:30am Robert J. Poth, Chet Togno

11:30am Antoinette Gugliemini,  
Anthony Kowalski, Sr. & Jr.

1:30pm Special Intention

**Monday, January 10, 2022**

10am Robert Suralik, Gus Andico

**Tuesday, January 11, 2022**

10am Chet Togno

**Wednesday, January 12, 2022**

10am Chet Togno

**Thursday, January 13, 2022**

10am Chester Togno

**Friday, January 14, 2022**

10am Anna Volpe

**Saturday, January 15, 2022**

10am Sherry Lopez

5pm Gus Andico, Christopher Hogan, Patricia Rea

**Sunday, January 16, 2022**

7am Special Intention

9:30am Ronald Costanzo, Special Intention

11:30am Robert Suralik, Chet Togno

1:30pm Special Intention

TITHING – GOD’S PLAN FOR GIVING  
ST. MICHAEL’S HAS BEEN A TITHING PARISH  
SINCE 1988.

Sunday, January 2, 2022 .....	\$4,961.00
WeShare .....	\$3,762.50
Repair & Renovation.....	\$1,491.00
WeShare R & R.....	\$246.00

Christmas 2021.....	\$13,918.00
WeShare .....	\$1,120.00

Sunday, December 26, 2021.....	\$4,332.00
WeShare .....	\$2,532.50

**Deacon Russ**  
**Homily from January 2, 2022**

**The White Elephant in the Room.**

As we are in the season of gift giving it is appropriate that we review our gifts, both given and received. Like many of you, while loving to receive gifts, I find equal pleasure in giving gifts and often can't wait to give them. A lot of thought goes into these gifts, but we must ask ourselves, are they truly the best gift that we can give? We spend so much time thinking about what to get people who in reality, might just not need what we get them. Would this type of giving make Jesus happy? Are they gifts fit for a King? To make this call, we must look back at what the original gifts were. As we heard in Matthew's Gospel this morning, the Magi did him homage and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold, a symbol of royalty, represents His kingship; frankincense, used in worship, points to His divinity; and myrrh represents His humanity, particularly in His passion and death. Because the Bible does not give us the quantity of the gifts, to figure out their monetary worth is impossible. But their spiritual value is what we must focus on. These were meaningful gifts pointing towards the future knowing that this Child was the Savior of the world and thus they knew that they better give good gifts.

So what about the gifts are we giving? Have you ever participated in a White Elephant gift exchange? I have, as a matter of fact, twice in the last several weeks. Do we remember what the gifts we gave or received were? Maybe, but give it a few months, and they will slip out of our memory. So what gifts can we give that are fit for the King? There are quite a few, and unlike the ones we have become accustomed to receiving, the expensive ones, these are not going to eat up a lot of our income, maybe our time, but not our income.

We need to rethink our gift giving. In school, we did a secret Santa and there were three gifts that we were to give. These gifts were based on a questionnaire and prior knowledge of the person. The first gift I received was a bag of Buffalo Sauce flavored pretzels. It was nice, but it was consumed and forgotten. The second gift I received was a play toy for our dog Pepper. She loved it for a few days, and it is since relegated to the pile of dog toys. The third gift I received was amazing. It was a piece of paper with the simple words, \$25 was donated to the community food pantry in your name. It was the best gift I received this Christmas. I don't need stuff, I really don't want stuff, while I appreciate stuff, this gift was perfect and I think fit for the King.

Since it is New Years, It is appropriate that we think about a few resolutions. How about we rethink our gift giving this year. Let's be like the Magi and give gifts that

matter. What is the perfect gift? I went down the rabbit hole of the Internet to see what the experts had to say, and the answers were all over the spectrum. Not too helpful. I looked at my own habits, not too helpful, then while sitting in front of my computer in a form of writers' block, I asked the Holy Spirit to help me. This is what I got. The perfect gift is giving what is most precious and most valuable to us. It is not the newest version of the hottest gaming system, although Father Mike might disagree here, it is not a new car with a huge red bow on the hood, nor is it the latest cell phone with cameras that qualify to make professional motion pictures. Instead it is like that donation to the food pantry, something that does not serve me, but serves Him. So what would qualify as a great gift in God's eyes? Maybe we should look at what would qualify as a great gift in our eyes. If we give a gift, we really would want to see that person using it, and using it a lot. Not to be placed in a bag in a closet for some future White Elephant exchange. Maybe the best gift, and the gift that God wants us to give, is the gift of us using our gifts that God has given all of us.

The best part of these gifts, is that they really cost nothing monetarily but mean everything in a meaningful way. Here are three possible gifts for us to give. The first being prayer. We need to give the gift of prayer. We need to pray for people. While the Catholic Church has dozens of formal prayers, and that is good, we must not overlook the beauty of just talking to God with a daily conversation. Just talk, He will listen, but don't forget, you too must listen very carefully for His response. It will probably not come back as some huge revelation, but rather a gentle nudge to our conscience. I'm sure that we all know someone who could use our prayers now. I will add a prayer for a parent of two of my students who was hit by a car and is in ICU with a very long road ahead of him. This family have been and will be in my daily conversation with God. I challenge you to do the same with an individual or individuals in your life that you know who needs God's embrace. This is a gift that we can give and the receiver may never know, the type of gift that Jesus would want us to give.

The second gift could be the gift of our time and talents. Time is very scarce and thus valuable. Time can be given by the traditional means of volunteering to help a neighbor, an organization, an outreach, or even our own Church. St. Michael's is always in need of readers, servers, people to help clean, prepare our first Sunday breakfast, teach religious education, chaperone youth activities, or spend time in the chapel with Jesus. We could also give a gift of spending time and being truly present to someone. This is something I must get better at. Your gift could be going out with that person for a walk, a talk, lunch, or something they would enjoy. In other words, be a friend, a true friend. Likewise, we can

also give our talents. God has given us these and we must share with others what He has given us. If you have a gift that is needed, pass it along.

The last of the three gifts we all must give is the gift of love. This might be by far the hardest to give. It is easy to give it to people who you know, admire, and respect, but how are we in giving it to people who we do not know or who we do not necessarily agree with? This is a central point of our faith. We are commanded to love one another. This command cannot be understated. We all know that there are people in our world that need love. People who oppose our political, religious, philosophical, social, and many other beliefs. People who maybe oppose all that we stand for. These people need and must have our love. If you are struggling here, a book I highly recommend is C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. In one of the many notable parts, Lewis states the case for Christian love in a very clear manner. If we fail to love we fail to behave as Christians and ... "When we Christians behave badly, or fail to behave well, we are making Christianity unbelievable to the outside world." So as hard as it may be, we all must love.

So there you have it, three gifts worthy of a king and three gifts that will be both appreciated by the receiver and by Jesus unlike that White Elephant gift that we might have given a few weeks earlier. While the blender I received several weeks ago is quite amazing, I don't think that that gift is going to change the world. The suggestions from before, while maybe not changing the entire world, they will change some or possibly many lives. Remember, pray, give, and love until it hurts, for that is what God does for us and we must do the same for Him.

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### Deacon John

#### Homily from January 2, 2022

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Can you recognize the signs of the times? The Magi could, they saw the star rising, understood what it meant and began to search. The thing that I find amazing is that so many people saw the same star and didn't search. Perhaps they were too distracted with their own issues. The scholars of the law knew where to look; they knew what the sign meant. They were able to tell Herod where the child would be, but they didn't bother to look for the child themselves. As God was born into the world, Shepherds were proclaiming Glory to God, and Kings were coming from distant lands, yet in Jerusalem it was business as usual.

The world that Jesus was born into was enduring some very turbulent times, political powers battling against each other while an oppressive occupying power ruled over them with an iron hand. Religious factions were

fighting against each other with both sides thinking that God was on their side, their world was a tinderbox ready to burst into flames, and yet this was the exact time when God chose to manifest himself in the flesh to save his people. They were just too busy with their own day to day lives to see the sign. As they say, history continues to repeat itself. In our world many of us are also too distracted to see the signs of the times. In our lives we get so distracted by the trials and tribulations of day to day life that we fail to see the forest through the trees. We can get distracted by political battles, fears about health or money issues; while our values of Faith, Family, and freedom are under attack by an oppressive culture ruled by the iron hand of sin. We need to open our eyes and see the sign. In spite of the craziness of the world, in spite of the political hostility, in spite of turmoil over faith and religion, Jesus has kept his promise. He remains here with us. We have him right here in our midst, so why are we still overwhelmed by worldly anxiety? Do we trust God or not?

He has promised His divine providence will protect us and provide for all our needs, yet we struggle and worry about money, about the weather, about a virus that might get us sick. Yet we rarely give a second thought regarding sin which will destroy our eternal soul. It is time to see the sign. The things that cause us grief and despair distract us from our true mission. God has a plan for us, and if we just listen to him and follow the light he is shining for us, we can find the peace and contentment that he is offering to us. Now is the perfect time to throw away the baggage of sin, create a clean slate and start the New Year fresh. As an example, perhaps we could try putting the electronic devices down and try picking up a Rosary, perhaps a device free dinner with the entire family would allow the light of Christ back into our homes, or maybe just some quiet time in prayer would restore peace in our hearts. Silence is a wonderful way to hear God speaking to our soul. A wonderful way to start the year, with a clean slate of a soul, would be with the least used, but most needed Sacrament, confession. If it's been more than a month since your last Confession, the worldly wear and tear of sin begins to weigh down upon you. While you may not be carrying the weight of a mortal sin, the graces of the Sacrament will help you fight the daily temptations that might creep into your life.

Right now in our country, our world, and our lives, we need a Savior. It is very easy to let life drag us down into a routine and then into a rut which can lead to anxiety or depression. As we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord, this is the perfect time to have our own Epiphany. As this New Year begins, it is a great time to open our eyes and hearts and search for the Messiah. So think about letting the old pass away and looking for the new. Look up, see your star, and follow Him.

## FAITH FORMATION

### **Calendar Updates/Reminders, K-7:**

- There is a Family Session scheduled for Jan. 9. Out of an abundance of caution, only for this month, we will not have that session after Mass. Instead, the session will be posted on the website and we ask parents to go through the teaching with their children some time during the week.
- As long as you are in good health and not quarantined, please participate in any Mass for Jan. 9.
- *For grades K-7, class sessions following Mass will begin again on Jan. 16*

### **Confirmation II (sophomores):**

- Next session today, Jan. 9, regular time and place. Please hand in mass sheets and service forms no later than the 9<sup>th</sup>!!
- Sponsor Paperwork: due 1/15/22. Please hand in blue info form AND signed Sponsor form TOGETHER).

### **Middle School Confirmation (gr. 8 and 9)**

- Next session today, Jan. 9, regular time and place. Please hand in mass sheets and service forms no later than the week of the 9<sup>th</sup>!!
- Sponsor Paperwork: due 1/30/22. Please hand in blue info form AND signed Sponsor form TOGETHER).

### **NET group**

- Next session 1/16, regular time and place
- Please hand in , on the 16th, your completed service forms and signed Mass sheets.



## YOUTH MINISTRY

Our next Youth Ministry meeting will be on  
Monday, January 10, 2022 at 7pm.

If you have any questions, please email me at  
[youth.ministry@stmichaeltcong.org](mailto:youth.ministry@stmichaeltcong.org)

-Nicole



**Happy Birthday to Margaret Lamanna**

(Chet Togno's sister)

On December 30, 2021 she turned 100!

God Bless You!



### **EL BAUTISMO DEL SEÑOR**

#### **Domingo**

Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Is 40:1-5, 9-11;  
Acts 10:34-38 or Ti 2:11-14, 3:4-7;  
Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

#### **Lunes**

1 Sm 1:1-8; Mk 1:14-20

#### **Martes**

1 Sm 1:9-20; Mk 1:21-28

#### **Miércoles**

1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20; Mk 1:29-39

#### **Jueves**

1 Sm 4:1-11; Mk 1:40-45

#### **Viernes**

1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a; Mk 2:1-12

#### **Sábado**

1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19, 10:1; Mk 2:13-17

### **EL BAUTISMO DEL SEÑOR**

#### **Primera Lectura: Isaías 42:1-4, 6-7**

Isaías cuenta del Siervo del Señor, quién será discreto, pero quien no descansará hasta que la justicia sea establecida. El Señor luego dice a su Siervo que fué formado para ser “una luz para las naciones”.

#### **Segunda Lectura: Hechos 10:34-38**

Pedro habla a un grupo de paganos por primera vez. Les explica que cualquier persona que sigue a Dios es aceptable a El, sin importar su nacionalidad.

#### **Evangelió: San Lucas 3:15-16, 21-22**

Juan el Bautista asegura que uno llegará, quien es más poderoso que él mismo, uno que bautizará con el Espíritu Santo en vez de agua. Cuando Jesús vino a ver a Juan y fué bautizado, el Espíritu descendió en El y una voz dijo: “Tú eres mi hijo amado a quien he elegido”.

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