

Parish Staff

Pastor

Rev. David Powers Sch.P.

Parochial Vicars

Rev. Nelson Henao Sch.P.

Rev. Richard Wyzykiewicz Sch.P.

Parish Secretary

Mrs. Rosemarie Ortiz

Music Director

Mr. Patrick Marques

Organists

Mr. Franco Bonanome

Mr. Jim Donaldson

Cantors

Mrs. Terry Bonanome

Mr. Alex Henriquez

December 2016-January 2017

Development Director

Mrs. Stephanie Turtle

St. Helena's School (718) 892-3234

<http://www.sthelenaelementary.org>

Early Childhood (3Yr Olds & Pre-K for All)

Elementary School (Grades K-8)

Principal: Mr. Richard Meller
2050 Benedict Avenue
Bronx, New York 10462

High School:

Monsignor Scanlan H.S. (718) 430-0100

<http://www.scanlanhs.edu/>

Principal: Mr. Peter Doran
915 Hutchinson River Parkway
Bronx, New York 10465

St. Helena Rectory:

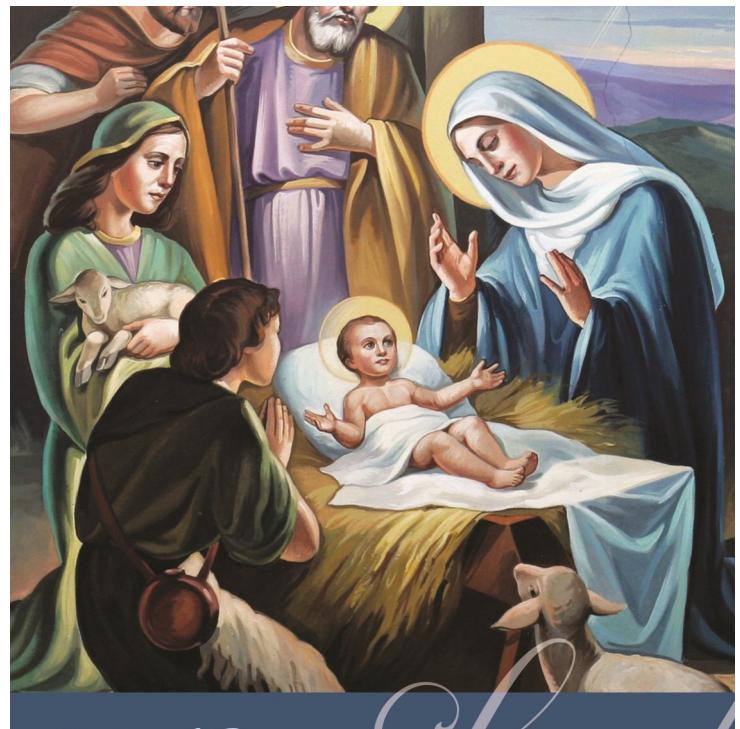
1315 Olmstead Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10462

Phone: (718) 892-3232
Fax: (718) 892-7713

www.churchofsthelena.com

Email: sthelenarc@yahoo.com

Alumni: sthelenasalumni@yahoo.com



saint Helena parish



Bronx, NY

Mass Schedule (Horario de Misas)

Saturday: 5:30 PM

Sunday: AM	PM
7:30	12:00 (Spanish)
9:00	1:30
10:30 (Family)	5:00

Holy Days: 6:50AM, 8:30 AM, 12:15 PM and 7:30 PM

Weekdays: 6:50AM, 8:30 AM and 12:15 PM

Morning Prayer—Daily 8:30AM

Spanish Mass: Sunday, 12:00 Noon

Holy Days — Evenings Before—7:00PM

Wednesday —7:00 PM (Spanish)

Monday 7:00PM (every first Monday of the month in Spanish)

Primeros lunes de mes

Confessions:

Saturday — 4 to 5:30

Sick Or Emergency Calls:

At any time
call the Rectory at 892-3232

Devotions:

- Circulo De Oracion: lunes, 7 a 9PM,
- Miraculous Medal Novena
Monday after 12:15 PM Mass
- Exposición del Santísimo y Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia: miércoles, 7PM
- Eucharistic Adoration
Thursday between the 8:30 & 12:15 Masses
- Sacred Heart Novena: Thursday, Noon
- English Bible Study: Tuesday, 7:30PM

Baptisms:

Arrangements must be made at the
Rectory for Baptismal Class.
Bring copy of child's Birth Certificate.

Marriages:

Arrangements for weddings should be
made as soon as possible at the Rectory.

Parish Registration:

All Catholics who live within the
parish boundaries should fill out a
registration card at Church or Rectory.



Handicapped Accessible

HAPPY NEW YEAR**SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
MASS SCHEDULE****Saturday, December 31**

**5:30pm Parish New Year's Mass (English) Adult Choir
7:00pm Parish New Year's Mass (Spanish) Adult Choir**

Sunday, January 1, 2017**NO 7:30AM MASS**

9:00am (Children's Choir)

10:30am (Adult Choir)

NOON (Spanish Mass and Choir)

1:30pm (Bilingual French/English) French Choir

5:00pm

**THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**

In the early centuries of the Church, once Christmas began to be celebrated as its own feast on December 25 (having originally been celebrated with the Feast of the Epiphany, on January 6), the Octave (eighth day) of Christmas, January 1, took on a special meaning. In the East, and throughout much of the West, it became common to celebrate a feast of Mary, the Mother of God, on this day. This feast was never established in the universal calendar of the Church, however, and later in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a separate feast, celebrating the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ (which would have taken place a week after His birth), eventually took hold of January 1 and was included in the missal of Pope St. Pius V.

The solemnity of the Mother of God, which now coincides with the octave-day of Christmas and the beginning of the new year, was probably assigned this day because of the influence of the Byzantine Church, which celebrates the synapsis of the most holy Theotokos on December 26. This is in accordance with the Eastern practice of honoring secondary persons on the day after the feast of the principal personage (in this case, the birth of Christ). The Coptic Church celebrates this feast on January 16, but in the West, as early as the fifth century, the feast was celebrated on the Sunday after Christmas, although in France it was celebrated on January 18 and in Spain on December 18. Even before Pope Sergius introduced four Marian feasts in the seventh century (the Birth of Mary, the Annunciation, the Purification and the Assumption), the octave day of Christmas was celebrated in Rome in honor of the Maternity of Mary. The recent liturgical reform has restored the original Roman practice, which replaced the pagan feast of the New Year, dedicated to the god Janus, with this feast honoring the Mother of God.

One of the earliest titles given by Christians to the Blessed Virgin was Theotokos—"God-bearer." Today, we celebrate her as the

Mother of God, because, in bearing Christ, she bore the fullness of the Godhead within her. The Council of Ephesus in 431 officially bestowed this title upon her. The faith of the Church is already expressed in the Apostles' Creed with the assertion that Christ "was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary," and the Council of Ephesus used this statement to defend Mary's title as "Theotokos," not in the sense that the nature of the Word and his divinity had their origin in the Virgin Mary, but that the Word, the second Person of the Trinity, was born of her according to the flesh. What was born of her was the humanity to which the Word is united hypostatically.

With the revision of the liturgical calendar at the time of the introduction of the *Novus Ordo*, the Feast of the Circumcision was set aside, and the ancient practice of dedicating January 1 to the Mother of God was revived—this time, as a universal feast. In the encyclical *Marialis Cultus* (1974) Pope Paul VI states: "This celebration, assigned to January 1 in conformity with the ancient liturgy of the city of Rome, is meant to commemorate the part played by Mary in this mystery of salvation. It is meant also to exalt the singular dignity which this mystery brings to the 'holy Mother . . . through whom we were found worthy . . . to receive the Author of life.' It is likewise a fitting occasion for renewed adoration of the newborn Prince of Peace, for listening once more to the glad tidings of the angels, and for imploring from God, through the Queen of Peace, the supreme gift of peace. For this reason . . . we have instituted the World Day of Peace, an observance that is gaining increasing support and is already bringing forth fruits of peace in the hearts of many" (no. 5).

In fact, the Church regards the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, as so important that it is a Holy Day of Obligation. On this day, we are reminded of the role that the Blessed Virgin played in the plan of our salvation. Christ's Birth was made possible by Mary's *fiat*: "Be it done unto me according to Thy word."

As we begin another year, we draw inspiration from the selfless love of the Theotokos, who never hesitated to do the will of God. And we trust in her prayers to God for us, that we might, as the years pass, become more like her. *O Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!*

**THIS WEEK WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST DAYS
OF TWO SAINTS WITH NEW YORK CITY
CONNECTIONS**

January 4 is the feast day of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton (1774-1821), the first native-born American to be canonized by the Catholic Church. Born two years before the American Revolution, Elizabeth grew up in the upper class of New York society. She was a prolific reader and read everything from the Bible to contemporary novels.



In spite of her high society background, Elizabeth's early life was quiet, simple, and often lonely. As she grew a little older, the Bible was to become her continual instruction, support, and comfort—and she would continue to love the Scriptures for the rest of her life. In 1794, Elizabeth married the wealthy young William Seton, with whom she was deeply in love. The first years of their marriage were happy and prosperous. Elizabeth wrote in her diary at first autumn, "My own home at twenty—the world—that and heaven too—quite impossible."

However, this time of Elizabeth's life was to be a brief moment of earthly happiness before the many deaths and partings she was to suffer. Within four years, William's father died, leaving the young couple in charge of William's seven half brothers and sisters, as well as the family's importing business. Both William's business

SOLEMNITY OF MARY

and health failed. He was finally forced to file bankruptcy and, in a final attempt to save William's health, the Setons sailed for Italy, where William had business friends. Unfortunately, William died of tuberculosis while in Italy. Elizabeth's one consolation was that he had recently awakened to the things of God.

Elizabeth's deep concern for the spiritual welfare of her family and friends eventually led her into the Catholic Church. In Italy, Elizabeth captivated everyone by her kindness, patience, good sense, wit, and courtesy. During this time Elizabeth became interested in the Catholic Faith and, over a period of months, her Italian friends guided her in Catholic instruction. Her desire for the Bread of Life was to be a strong force leading her to the Catholic Church. Having lost her mother at an early age, Elizabeth felt great comfort in the idea that the Blessed Virgin was truly her mother. She asked the Blessed Virgin to guide her to the True Faith and officially joined the Catholic Church in 1805. At the suggestion of the president of St. Mary's College in Baltimore, Maryland, Elizabeth started a school in that city. The school had originally been secular but once news of her entrance to Catholicism spread, several girls were removed from her school. It was then that Seton, and two other young women who helped her in her work, began plans for a Sisterhood. They established the first free Catholic school in America. When the young community adopted their rule, they made provisions for Elizabeth to continue raising her children.

On March 25, 1809, Elizabeth Seton pronounced her vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, binding for one year. From that time she was called Mother Seton. Although Mother Seton herself became afflicted with tuberculosis, she continued to guide her children. The Rule of the Sisterhood was formally ratified in 1812. It was based upon the Rule St. Vincent de Paul had written for his Daughters of Charity in France. By 1818, in addition to their first school, the sisters had established two orphanages and another school. Today, six groups of sisters can trace their origins to Mother Seton's initial foundation. Her favorite prayer was the 23rd Psalm.

For the last three years of her life, Elizabeth felt that God was getting ready to call her, and this gave her great joy. Mother Seton died in 1821 at the age of 46, only sixteen years after becoming a Catholic. She was beatified by Pope John XXIII on March 17, 1963 and was canonized on September 14, 1975 by Pope Paul VI.

January 5 is the feast day of *Jan Nepomucký Neumann* (1811 – 1860), a Catholic priest from Bohemia who was born on March 28, 1811, in Prachatice to Johann Philipp Neumann, a stocking knitter and Agnes Lebisch. He attended a school in České Budějovice, operated by the Piarist Fathers, before entering the seminary in 1831. Two years later he transferred to the Charles University in Prague, where he studied theology, though he was also interested in astronomy and botany. By the time he was twenty-four, he had learned six languages. His goal was to be ordained to the priesthood, and he applied for this after completing his studies in 1835.

His bishop, however, had decided that there would be no more ordinations at that time, as Bohemia had numerous priests, and he had difficulty finding positions for them all. Deeply inspired by the letters of Father Frederic Baraga to the Leopold Missionary Society, he volunteered to labor in America. So in 1836 Neumann traveled to the United States in the hope of being ordained. He arrived in New York City with one suit of clothes and one dollar in



his pocket. Three weeks later, Bishop John Dubois, of the Society of Saint-Sulpice, ordained him at what is now the Old St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

After his ordination, Bishop Dubois assigned Neumann to work with recent German immigrants in the Niagara Falls area, where there were no established parish churches. His first assignment was the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Williamsville, New York. His parish in western New York stretched from Lake Ontario to Pennsylvania. People laughed at the clumsy way Father Neumann rode a horse; because he was short, his feet did not reach the stirrups. He traveled the countryside—visited the sick, taught catechism, and trained teachers to take over when he left. Neumann took up full-time residence in North Bush as the first pastor of St. John the Baptist Church (1836–40). He made this the base for his missionary work.

Because of the work and the isolation of his parish, Father John longed for community. In 1840, with Dubois' permission, Neumann applied to join the Redemptorist Fathers, was accepted, and entered their novitiate at St. Philomena's Church in Pittsburgh. He was their first candidate in the New World and took his religious vows as a member of the congregation in Baltimore, in January 1842. While a novitiate for the Redemptorists, he served at St. Alphonsus Church in Peru Township, Huron County, Ohio for five months before returning to New York. He served as the pastor of St. Augustine Church in Elkridge, Maryland, from 1849 to 1851. After six years of difficult but fruitful work in Maryland, Neumann became the Provincial Superior for the United States. The priest was naturalized as a United States citizen in Baltimore on February 10, 1848. He also served as parish priest at St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore.

On March 28, 1852, he was consecrated bishop of Philadelphia at the suggestion of Archbishop Francis Kenrick of Baltimore. As bishop, Neumann founded fifty churches in the diocese, advanced the program on the cathedral, and was noted especially for his contribution to Catholic education. Finding only two parochial schools at his arrival, Neumann established nearly one hundred by the time of his passing. He also cared for the poor and orphans, and founded the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis. He is the first United States bishop (and to date the only male citizen) to be canonized. While Bishop of Philadelphia, Neumann founded the first Catholic diocesan school system in the United States. He was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1963 and was canonized in 1977.

The origin of the term Feria: St. Sylvester I, pope and confessor, ruled the Church during the reign of Constantine when the Arian heresy and the Donatist schism had provoked great discord. He convoked the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. He governed the Church for more than twenty-one years. During his Pontificate were built the great churches founded at Rome by Constantine — the Basilica and baptistery of the Lateran, the Basilica of the Sessorian palace (Santa Croce), the Church of St. Peter in the Vatican, and several cemeterial churches over the graves of martyrs. He also established the Roman school of singing. On the Via Salaria he built a cemeterial church over the Catacomb of St. Priscilla, and it was in this church that he was buried when he died on December 31, 335. Numerous legends dramatize his life and work, e.g., how he freed Constantine from leprosy by baptism; how he killed a ferocious dragon that was contaminating the air with his poisonous breath. Such legends were meant to portray the effects of baptism and Christianity's triumph over idolatry. For a long time the feast of St. Sylvester was a holy day of obligation. He called a weekday on which no feast falls *feria*, because for the Christian every day is a "free day."

JANUARY 1, 2017

**TRADITIONAL EPIPHANY BLESSING
OF THE HOME**

The feast of manifestation, or Epiphany, is traditionally celebrated the 12th day after Christmas, January 6th. However, in the dioceses of the United States this feast has been moved to the Sunday after Christmas, which this year is on January 8. The whole of the Christmas season, especially on the feast of the Epiphany, is a traditional time to bless homes, including passageways and doorways.

Often related to these blessings is a ritual of "chalking" the doors of the home with the numbers of the year separated by the initials, CMB. The letters traditionally refer to the legendary names of the three kings: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar (Scripture neither names them nor says there were three of them). Another tradition refers to it as the abbreviation of the Latin phrase, Christus mansionem benedicat, translated as "May Christ bless this house." This ceremony of the blessing of the home and inscription of the initials of the three Magi above each door can be performed either by a priest or the father of the family.

The Epiphany custom in Germany is that of a childrens' festival between January 1-6 (Three Kings Day). After a service at the churches the children go from house to house to gather offerings for poor children in poor countries. They are dressed as the three kings and carry sticks with stars on the top. At the homes they sing songs and recite messages of Christmas. At each house they paint the letters "20+C+M+B+17".

Here is a simple Epiphany blessing you can use to bless your house or apartment:

All make the Sign of the Cross.

Head of Household: "Peace be to this house and: to all who dwell here, in the name of the Lord."

All: *Blessed be God forever.*

Reader: *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be..... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-3.14)*

Using chalk, write on the outside of your house, above or next to an entrance:

**+20
Christus
Mansionem
Benedicat
17+**

These words mean. "May Christ bless this house". (Each word could be written by a different member of the household.)

or optionally you may use the names of the Magi

**+20
Caspar
Melchior
Balthazar**

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Sunday, December 25, 2016

\$14,866.56

Our weekly budget, (Nuestro presupuesto semanal es) \$4,423.00

Thank you to everyone for your generosity and for your support and for all that you do for St. Helena's Parish. We have some major capital repair expenses on our boilers and air conditioning coming up, and we are pleased to report that this year's Christmas Offering exceeded last year's. I ask you to please consider increasing your regular weekly offerings a little so that we can meet or exceed our 2017 weekly budget goal and be able to pay for much needed physical plant improvements.

Gracias a todos por su generosidad y por todo lo que hacen por esta Iglesia de St. Helena.

17+

BI-LINGUAL FRENCH NEW YEARS DAY MASS: The French-speaking community here at St. Helena will join with the English-speaking community on New Years Day and will participate in a special Mass at 1:30PM. The Mass will be bi-lingual in French and English and will feature the French Choir. Afterward, there will be a reception in the gym to celebrate New Years Day - the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God.

New Envelope System: Currently, St. Helena's Parish has 1,200 registered families, and each year about 350 families take offertory envelope boxes, which are given out at the end of December and early January. Of those who take boxes, only about 200 people use them on a regular basis. This year, we are going to try something new. Instead of giving out boxes with envelopes for the entire year, we will instead mail envelopes out every two months. We understand that many people lose or misplace their envelope boxes, and we hope this method will encourage more parishioners to use their envelopes. We only want to mail these envelopes out to those people who would like to use them, so we want to know who would like us to mail them their offertory envelopes. We will automatically mail envelopes only to those parishioners who regularly use them, and we have placed special violet Welcome envelopes in the pews and in the Narthex for anyone to indicate that they would like us to mail them their envelopes. If you have not yet received your envelopes and you would like to, just fill in the envelope and either drop it in the collection basket or bring it to the rectory. Offertory envelopes serve as a symbol of how faithful giving is critical to establishing a long-term sustainable ministry. They also serve as proof of active parish membership as well as documentation for charitable giving deductions when doing your taxes. We encourage all parishioners to either use parish pay on-line giving, available through our parish website: www.churchofsthelena.com or use the weekly offertory envelopes.

ST. HELENA ALUMNI INFORMATION AND

ADDRESSES NEEDED-We are seeking to update our alumni data base. We realize that many alumni have either moved, married, passed, or are not on the alumni list. If you have not received any recent mailings from St. Helena, please call or email your address to us so we can add you. Also, let us know if anything special has happened in your life so we can share it with other alumni. Have a Blessed Christmas.

CATHOLIC COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN-Next week, our second collection is for the Catholic Communication Campaign. This campaign connects people with Christ, here and around the world in developing countries, through the internet, television, radio, and print media. Fifty percent of funds collected remains in our diocese to fund local communications efforts. Your support helps spread the gospel message! To learn more, visit www.usccb.org/ccc

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **NEW 50/50 DRAWING**-Many parishioners have suggested that we revise our traditional 50/50 drawings to allow for a larger cash prize. Therefore, starting in January, we will no longer have a weekly drawing, but rather a monthly drawing, and the cost to participate in it will be only \$5/month, which is actually \$3 less than if you contributed \$2/week for four weeks. We hope that you will enjoy this new drawing. As we have done previously, pink 50/50 envelopes will be available both in your mailed offertory envelopes as well as at the entrances to the church. The FIRST drawing will take place at the end of January.
- **CALENDARS**-Our 2017 Calendars will be distributed today, New Year's Day.
- **NO RCIA CLASS, January 1.**
- **BIBLE STUDY**-On **January 10**, at both **1PM and 7:30PM**, in the green Parish Center, we will begin a 24 week study of The Gospel of Matthew. Our Summer Bible Study in July will be Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.
- **NEXT BAPTISM PREP CLASSES** will be held on **January 12 and 26 at 7PM**. Please bring a copy of the child's birth certificate as well as either a letter of suitability for the godparents from their local pastor or a copy of the godparent's Confirmation Certificate and if a godparent is married, a copy of their Catholic Marriage Certificate.
- **PARISH BOOKSTORE** will be closed on New Year's Day, and will reopen on Sunday, January 8.
- **SHORT TERM COUNSELING AVAILABLE**-Let's face it. Life can be so confusing, especially during the holiday season, and we all need counseling sometimes. But costs can keep people away. Now, thanks to the Catholic Charities Parish Counseling Network, St. Helena parishioners now have access to affordable, short-term professional counseling. What's more, counseling is available at convenient locations throughout the Archdiocese. Up to six sessions can take place with just an inexpensive \$10 co-pay per session. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact one of the priests here at St. Helena.
- **END OF THE YEAR BUSINESS TAX DEDUCTIONS**-This is the time of year that many businesses are looking for last minute business deductions. If your business is a partnership, a limited liability company, or an S corporation (a corporation that has chosen to be taxed like a partnership), your business can make a charitable contribution to St. Helena and pass the deduction through to you, to claim on your individual tax return. If you own a regular (C) corporation, the corporation can deduct the charitable contributions.
- **NEW TAX LEGISLATION**-Did you know that Congress recently passed permanent legislation for parishioners who are: 70 1/2 Years of Age with--Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) and want to withdraw money from their IRA to Give Tax Free to St. Helena. In addition, if you converted your traditional IRA to a Roth IRA this year, you can offset the taxable income generated by the conversion by making a charitable gift to St. Helena.
We hope everyone will please consider a special Christmas or Year End gift. The parish has recently done repair work on the boilers that will cost around \$50,000, and we will need to replace the Parish Center roof which will cost about

\$20,000, as well as put in a new conditioning system that could cost around \$300,000. We are still getting estimates, and we need your help with these new capital expenses.

- **AA BIG BOOK STUDY** meets every **Sat., 7-8:30PM** in the green building.
- **FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME MAINTENANCE OR HANDYMAN JOB** position needed. E-mail: josecolon1080@gmail.com or call **347-964-9539**.
- **APARTMENTS WANTED**-Within the Parkchester area. If you know of one that is available, please call the Rectory.
- **THE PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARSHIP**-provides graduating high school seniors with \$2,000 to be used to attend college and may be renewed for up to three additional years. Applicants must be practicing Catholics within the Archdiocese, have demonstrated academic achievement, and exhibited good character and leadership abilities. Contact the rectory if you wish to apply for this scholarship. Applications must be postmarked no later than **Feb. 17**.
- **A COURSE IN MIRACLES**-Rogier F. van Vlissingen is teaching a 13-week class A Course in Miracles every Sunday at St. Helena's from **3 to 4:30 PM**. For more information, call **917-549-0959**. A suggested donation is \$7/session. The course is now on break and will resume on **Sunday, Jan. 8**.
- **EXPLORE A FREE CATHOLIC INTERNET SITE**-St. Helena's Parish has a free subscription to an online platform called **FORMED**, and all parishioners now have unlimited access to faith formation programs, Bible Studies, Catholic-themed movies and programs, enjoy music, e-books and much more. It is very easy to register with **FORMED**. FIRST go to formed.org and click the REGISTER link in the middle of the page; enter the parish code **2KQQYD** and your email, then click "Go." Fill in the registration information. After registering, you will receive a message asking you to verify your email address. Check your email (it may be in your spam folder) and click VERIFY. You will be prompted to login. You can then enjoy using **FORMED**.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **THREE KINGS DAY CELEBRATION** on **Saturday, January 7 at 1PM** at Holy Family, Mechler Hall, 2158 Watson Avenue. Call 718-822-2049 to reserve your space.
- **NEW YORK ENCOUNTER 2017**, a FREE, three-day, Catholic cultural event, will take place **January 13-15** at the Metropolitan Pavillon, 125 West 18th St. This year's event challenges and tests the proposal that reality is attractive. For more information, contact info@newyorkencounter.org.
- **EMERGENCY SNOW LABORERS**-Sign up to be an emergency snow laborer and help remove snow and ice from bus stops, step streets, and other locations throughout the city this winter. Snow laborers will be paid \$15.00 per hour and, \$22.50 per hour after 40 hours are worked in a week. Must be at least 18 and eligible to work in the USA. Sign up at Bronx Yard, Mosholu Ave. & Broadway from **7AM-3PM**.
- **SILENCE** is a 2016 American historical drama film directed by Martin Scorsese and based upon the 1966 novel of the same name. The film was shot entirely in Taipei, Taiwan. The film premiered in Vatican City and was released in the United States on **Dec. 23**. In the seventeenth century, two Portuguese Jesuit priests face violence and persecution when they travel to Japan to locate their mentor who had committed apostasy after being tortured. The story takes place in the time of the Kakure Kirishitan ("Hidden

Please Pray for the Sick of our Parish

Joanne Frances Bernadette Sanabria, Sylvia Carballo, Ruben Mercado, Mike Adorno, Catherine Holden, Carmelle and Nicole Antoine, Indrowdi Sadu, Rosa Pena, Brenda Jackson, James Leunge, Carol Primak, Joan Ricci, Lucy Cannavacciuolo, Aaron Sylvester, Sean Gaffney, Bertha Mero, Peter Vaccaro, Gino Vaccaro, Veronica Gonzalez, Ronald Horne, Doris Waldrop, Milagro Vasquez, Juana Carmen Rodriguez, Ynes Tavarez, Theresa Delevan, Neil Duggan, Humberto Prieto, Jenny Mauro, Jimmy Mauro, Mariana Rivera, Annissa Ramratansingh, Catherine Gregson, Noemi Cross, Arley Johnson, Josefina Gonzalez, Rosa Amelia Escribano Santiago

Please Pray for the Deceased and their Grieving Families:

Miguel Colon, Jenna Klice, Fr. Cosimo Fazio, Deacon Robert Schimpf, Andrew Franz

Christians").

- **MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY**, a free eight-week course exploring what are the sacramental, spiritual, psychological, and societal aspects of marriage and family life, begins **Monday, January 9** from **7:30-9PM** at the Conference Room, 1573 Zerega Ave. It is not a pre-cana course. For more info, call **718-828-2380**.
- **CATHOLIC VOLUNTEER NETWORK**-Check out **RESPONSE 2017**, which is a free guide listing nearly 200 faith-based volunteer programs. Volunteers serve full-time for periods of one week to one year or more. To receive a free copy of **RESPONSE 2017**, call **800-543-5046** or e-mail info@catholicvolunteernetwork.org. Website: www.catholicvolunteernetwork.org for more info.

ANUNCIOS EN ESPANOL

- **PROXIMA SESION DE PREPARACION AL BAUTISMO**: *Enero 12 a las 7 pm* en la Iglesia. Trae contigo una copia y el original del certificado de nacimiento. Los padrinos deben traer: 1- una carta del pastor de la Iglesia donde pertenecen y 2- si están casados deben traer el certificado de matrimonio de la Iglesia Católica.
- **BOOK STORE**: Comenzará a funcionar de nuevo el 8 de enero.
- **GRUPO SANTA MADRE TERESA**: El grupo visitará el cinco de Enero los niños del Jacobi Medical Center para traerles la presencia de Jesús, compañía y regalos. Le pedimos a cada familia traer a la rectoría un regalo para un niño o niña. **Indique en una nota** si es para niño o niña y la edad. Digan **que se los entreguen al P. Nelson** quien se los dará al grupo. Gracias por su generosidad. Informe sobre el grupo, **Elba Vega: 646 667 5365**
- **GRUPO DE ORACION**: No habrá grupo de oración el lunes 2 de enero.
- **MIERCOLES DE LA MISERICORDIA**: Durante el último año hemos celebrado los miércoles el "Año de la Misericordia", gracias al regalo del Papa Francisco que nos ha invitado a conocer y reflexionar más acerca del misterio maravilloso de la misericordia de Dios. De ahora en adelante la meta no es solamente reflexionar acerca de la Misericordia de Dios, sino "**ser misericordia de Dios**". Ven los miércoles a adorar al Santísimo y a vivir con alegría el misericordioso regalo de la Eucaristía. **Invita a tus amigos y familiares a esta fiesta de amor!!!**
- **LEGION DE MARIA**: Todos los **viernes a las 7 pm**, ven a rezar el Rosario y a planear servicio a la comunidad.

• **SISTEMA DE SOBRES**: Les recomiendo registrarse en la parroquia, es una práctica sana mediante la cual la persona da sus aportes en los sobres que recibe. La Iglesia dará referencias y constancias y de membresía a la persona que esté registrada. Desde este año los sobres se enviarán mensualmente a sus casas.

BUEN DIA, HERMANOS:

Hola querida familia de Santa Helena. Deseo de corazón que hayan pasado una feliz Navidad. Cuando digo "feliz" me refiero, por supuesto, al compartir con la familia, pero de una manera particular a la reflexión que hacemos los cristianos cuando celebramos en el corazón que verdaderamente Dios se hace uno de nosotros. Este es un evento que debe tener un gran significado para la persona que acepta a Jesús como su Dios y Salvador, porque no celebramos tan sólo algo que sucedió hace más de dos mil años, sino especialmente algo que "sucede" día a día en nuestra existencia.

Esta es una pregunta que el **creyente** debe hacerse en forma repetitiva: verdaderamente permito, deseo, acepto "*con toda mi mente, con toda mi alma y con todo mi corazón*" que Jesús con sus enseñanzas, con su presencia espiritual y sacramental, con todo lo que ha sido, es y será *sea el Señor de mi vida?* Es mi relación con Él una en la que entrego mis más humanos y sagrados anhelos, con la certeza de saber que confío todo al único que me puede acompañar (*con absoluta autoridad*) a ser el verdadero ser humano que soy invitado a ser? El único que me puede dar un grado de luz, de claridad, de entendimiento y de fortaleza para vivir en verdadera libertad y amor mi existencia en esta tierra, comprendiendo cuál es la misión para la que he sido creado como ser que vivirá para siempre?

Todas esas son preguntas muy importantes para la persona que ha llegado al punto de confiar plenamente en Jesús y también para quien está en el camino -sin importar que tan lejos o que tan cerca- de acercarse cada vez más a Él, de confiar cada vez más a Él. En realidad, creo que casi nadie llega a "confiar plenamente" en Él, porque siempre tenemos cosas o actitudes o ideas o vicios que no queremos dejar. Sin embargo, la actitud de *gradual crecimiento* en la confianza en el Señor es lo que verdaderamente cuenta.

La Navidad es una fiesta tan grande en nuestra Iglesia que por eso la celebramos con algo que, litúrgicamente hablando, se llama Octava de Navidad. Esto se refiere a que este misterio lo reflexionamos durante ocho días como si fuera un solo día. En otras palabras, toda la semana siguiente a la celebración de Navidad la Iglesia vive con más intensidad el misterio del nacimiento de Cristo y las consecuencias de ese nacimiento en cada una de nuestras vidas.

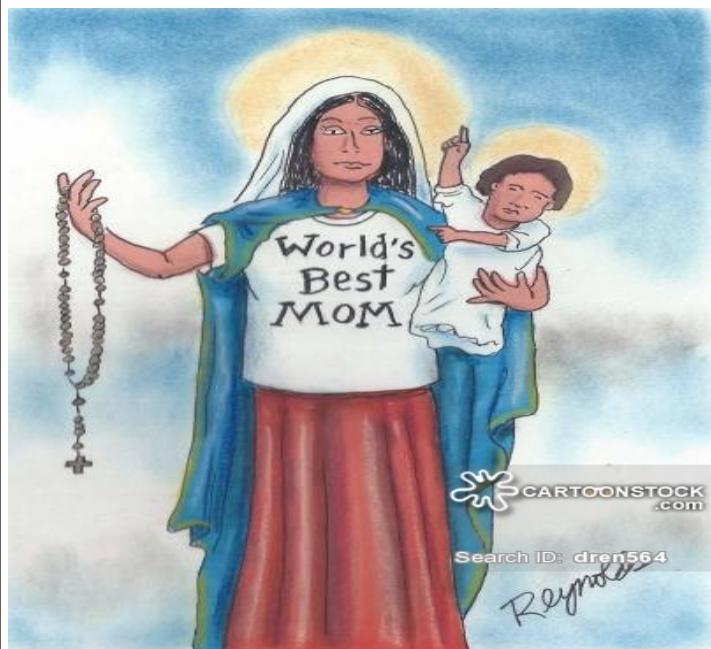
La Octava de Navidad termina hoy 1 de enero con la **Solemnidad de Santa María, Madre de Dios**. Sin embargo, el tiempo de Navidad continúa hasta el próximo domingo, cuando celebraremos la **Solemnidad de la Epifanía del Señor**. A partir del lunes 9 de enero, día en el que se celebrará la **Fiesta del Bautismo del Señor**, comienza la primera parte del Tiempo Ordinario del nuevo año en la Iglesia. Ya explicaré más adelante de que se trata aquello del Tiempo Ordinario. Por ahora alegrémonos por tener todas estas oportunidades de agradecer y rendir culto al Dios que ha hecho lo posible y lo imposible, para elevarnos a un nivel de comprensión de la vida muy superior al nivel de superficialidad que nos ofrece el mundo.

Deseo de corazón que esta Navidad haya dejado en tu vida, en tus relaciones y en tu corazón algo nuevo, algo que te invite desde muy adentro a iniciar este año con un sentimiento muy profundo de sentirse amado y con unos deseos inmensos de vivir cada día en plenitud, con sus alegrías y dificultades, la maravillosa existencia que sólo por amor se nos ha dado y que se nos invita a vivir sólo en el amor.

Durante la Octava de Pascua la liturgia nos ha regalado textos muy interesantes para acompañarnos en nuestra reflexión. Por ejemplo, el evangelio ha estado salpicado con lecturas de San Lucas y San Mateo. La persona que quiera durante este tiempo leer y reflexionar detenidamente acerca del nacimiento de Jesús, puede leer los capítulos uno y dos de cada uno de estos evangelios. Además, las biblias católicas tienen maravillosos comentarios que ayudan a comprender mejor el mensaje de la Palabra de Dios.

La primera lectura de estos días nos ha acompañado especialmente con la primera carta de San Juan. Aquí deseo detenerme un momento. No dudo en recomendar sinceramente la lectura de esta carta. No es un documento muy largo, son sólo cinco capítulos. Su lectura es muy apropiada para este tiempo que vivimos en la Iglesia. Su teología es muy profunda. Su lectura nos ayuda a penetrar aún más en la identidad y origen de Aquel que consideramos *Nuestro Señor*. Quien desee hacer una “excelente” lectura espiritual antes de terminar la Navidad, lea la Primera Carta de San Juan. Recuerden, la Palabra de Dios se debe leer y releer. Hay que hacerlo despacio, an actitud de meditación y oración. Es esta manera la que le permite al Espíritu Santo penetrar verdaderamente en lo profundo de nuestro ser y dejar el camino preparado para la transformación de la persona.

Esta carta nos ayuda a clarificar el origen divino de Jesús. Es que nosotros no adoramos a un hombre muy bueno, eso sería idolatría. Nosotros adoramos *exclusivamente* al Hijo de Dios. Ella nos ayuda a tomar conciencia de que esta relación es una realidad viva en la persona y en la comunidad y que, por venir de Dios, nos plantea exigencias propias de un estilo de vida que propone el mismo Dios. Nos plantea el discernimiento entre lo que es ser cristiano de verdad o cristiano de mentiras. Nos ayuda a tener ciertos criterios para estar en *comunión* con el Padre y el Hijo, que es al final la esencia de la vida cristiana, esa es nuestra más clara *identidad*. En otras palabras, Juan nos confirma que a la



comunidad cristiana sólo le da sentido y vida la *comunión con Dios*, que siempre nos lleva a vivir en *comunión con el hermano*. Bendiciones.

P. Nelson

Mass Intentions

SUNDAY, January 1, 2017-SOLEMNITY OF MARY

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|-------|---|
| 7:30 | Christmas Novena |
| | Our Parishioners |
| 9:00 | In Thanksgiving for Favors |
| 10:30 | Intentions for Vallida Antonia and Gilbert Calderon |
| 12:00 | In Honor of San Miguel Arcangel |
| | Por la familia Galicia Cruz Dsorio |
| | Luz Helena Penafiel (Intentions & in Thanksgiving) |
| 1:30 | Mary Early (Intentions) |
| | Special Intention in Thanksgiving for the Miranda and Arroyo Families |
| 5:00 | Alberto Brinz |

MONDAY, January 2, 2017-Feast of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen

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| 6:50 | Christmas Novena |
| 8:30 | Alberto Brinz |
| 12:15 | Telma Anith and Family (Intentions) |
| | Eternal Rest for Enzo, Angie and Robert Magnozzi |
| 7:30 | Alberto Brinz |

TUES., Jan. 3, 2017-Feast of The Most Holy Name of Jesus

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| 6:50 | Divine Justice for Girls & Women Attacked by ISIS in Iraq |
| | Dolores Crumk (RIP) & Kevin Diaz (Health Intentions) |

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| 8:30 | Mary Early Intentions |
| 12:15 | Genevieve Cerbone |

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 4, 2017-Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

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| 6:50 | Gerard Millotti |
| 8:30 | In Thanksgiving for Favors |
| 12:15 | In Honor and Thanksgiving to St. Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton & Fr. Charles Newburn, Sch.P. (9th Month Mind Mass) |
| 7:30 | In Thanksgiving for Good Health for Baby Dylan Gonzalez |

THURSDAY, January 5, 2017-Feast of St. John Neumann

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| 6:50 | Divine Justice for Girls & Women Attacked by ISIS in Iraq |
| 8:30 | Telma Anith and Family (Intentions) |
| 12:15 | Dominica and Vincenzo D'Agostino |

FRIDAY, January 6, 2016-Feast of St. André Bessette

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| 6:50 | Valentine Wnek |
| 8:30 | Dermot Keane (Healing Mass) |
| 12:15 | Carlos Vicente Perez and Vicente Perez; Francisca Lopez and Marc Padilla |

SATURDAY, Jan. 7, 2017-Feast of St. Raymond of Peñafort

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| 6:50 | St. Helena's Benefactor's |
| 8:30 | In Thanksgiving for Favors |
| 12:15 | Jean and Guy Bosquet |
| 5:30 | Andrew Franz |

SUNDAY, January 8, 2017-The Epiphany of the Lord

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| 7:30 | Our Parishioners |
| 9:00 | Severia Verlezza |
| 10:30 | Julio Cruz and Family |
| 12:00 | Altagracia, Carmen, José & Manuel Capellan |
| | Mercedes Martinez (1 Year Anniversary) |
| 1:30 | Alessandra Mia Savino (Intentions) |
| 5:00 | Lorenzo Steve Torrez |

Readings for the Week of January 1, 2017

Sunday: Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21 Monday: 1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98/Jn 1:19-28 Tuesday: 1 Jn 2:29--3:6/Ps 98/Jn 1:29-

34 Wednesday: 1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98/Jn 1:35-42 Thursday: 1 Jn 3:11-21/Ps 100/Jn 1:43-51 Friday: 1 Jn 5:5-13/Ps 147/Mk 1:7-11