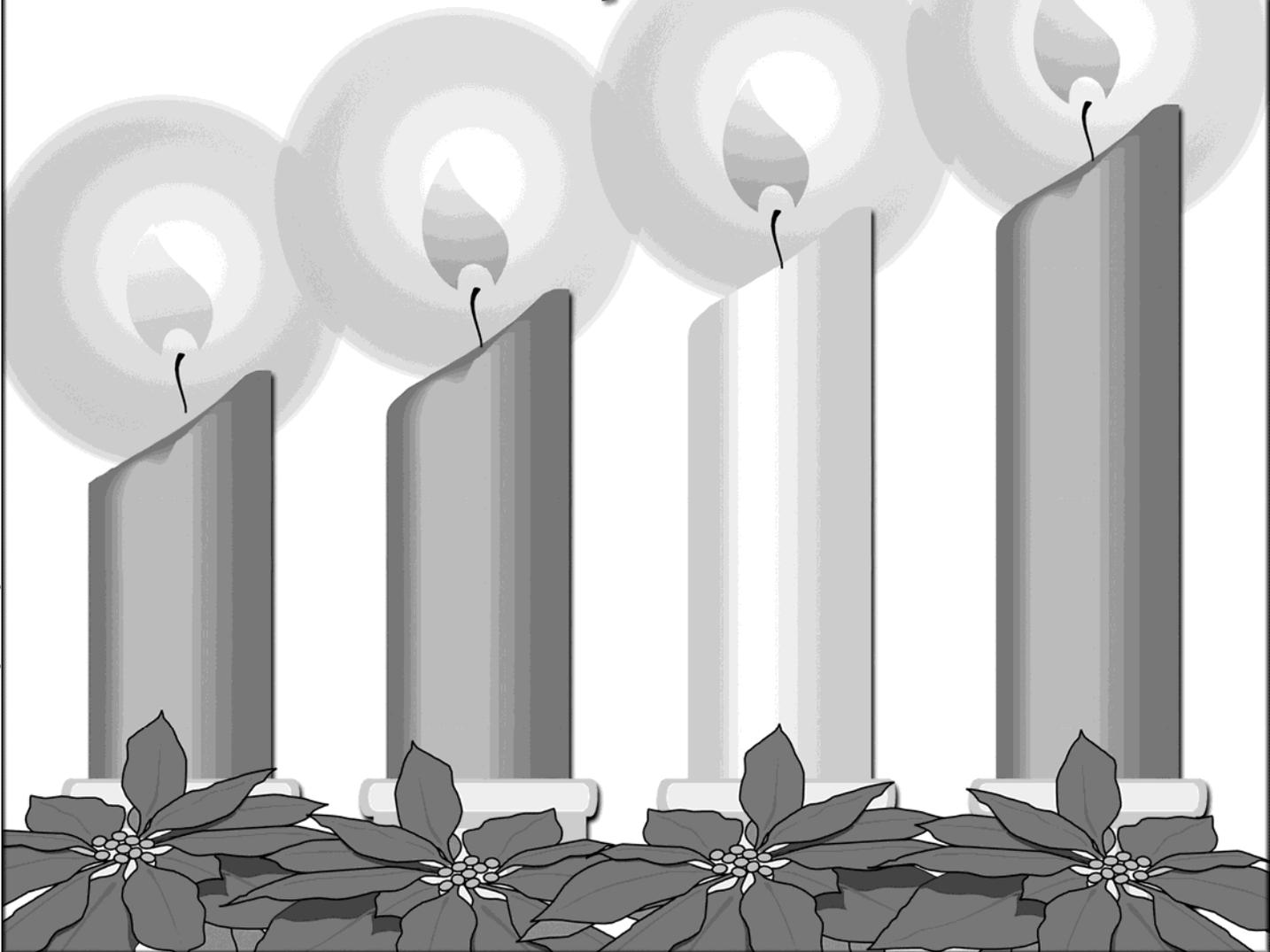




Fourth Sunday of Advent



MASS INTENTIONS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 –

Mi. 5: 1-4a; Heb. 10: 5-10; Lk. 1: 39-45

5:00 PM Walter and Anne Brady / req. by Dennis Brady

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23 –

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mi. 5: 1-4a; Heb. 10: 5-10; Lk. 1: 39-45

7:30 AM Oneida Hernandez
req. by John and Midas Hernandez

9:30 AM Joseph Sekerak / req. by Margaret Sekerak

12:00 PM All Parishioners – Living and Deceased

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24 – LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY

2 Sm. 7: 1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Lk. 1: 67-79

8:00 AM Cully and Torre Families
req. by the Torre Family

CHRISTMAS MASSES

5:00 PM All Parishioners – Living and Deceased

10:00 PM All Parishioners – Living and Deceased

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25 –

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

Is. 52: 7-10; Heb. 1: 1-6; Jn. 1: 1-18or 1: 1-5, 9-14

8:30 AM All Parishioners – Living and Deceased

11:00 AM All Parishioners – Living and Deceased

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26 –

ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Acts 6: 8-10, 7: 54-59; Mt. 10: 17-22

8:00 AM Catherine and Frank Marino
req. by Mary & Bruno Macchiavelli and Family

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27 –

ST. JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

1 Jn. 1: 1-4; Jn. 20: 1a, 2-8

8:00 AM Bernard Kelly
req. by Nicole and Andrew and Family

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28 –

THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

1 Jn. 1: 5-2: 2; Mt. 2: 13-18

8:00 AM Camille Rodino
req. by Teresa and Vinny Russo

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29 –

ST. THOMAS BECKET, BISHOP AND MARTYR

1 Jn. 2: 3-11; Lk. 2: 22-35

8:00 AM Zoila D'Ribeaux
req. by John and Midas Hernandez

5:00 PM Louis Oettinger / req. by Donna Oettinger

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30 –

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

1 Sm. 1: 20-22, 24-28; 1 Jn. 3: 1-2, 21-24; Lk. 2: 41-52

7:30 AM Deceased Members of the Drobinko and Ditzel
Families / req. by the Ditzel Family

9:30 AM All Parishioners – Living and Deceased

12:00 PM John Cully / req. by the Torre Family



From the Pastor

Dear Parishioners,

Within a few hours, we will once again hear the Angels proclaiming “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to those on whom his favor rest”. Those familiar words tell us of the great joy at the birth of Jesus. The Gloria which we sing at Mass, as well as so many Christmas hymns which we have been hearing for some time now, can help us to come closer to our God and to one another as we strive to spread the joy of the Christmas season.

But as the malls and shops begin their post-Christmas bargains, the Christmas music is no longer heard on the radio, and people begin to take down their trees, the holy season of Christmas is just beginning in our churches. During the next few weeks, we will celebrate several holy days such as the Holy Family, Mary, mother of God, the Epiphany, and the baptism of the Lord. These special feast days tell us that the Christmas season is a time of joy in our churches to remind us that Jesus came to live among us and to be like us in all things but sin. These feast days remind us that God loved the world so much, that he sent his Only Begotten Son to show us the way to eternal life.

On behalf of all the priests, staff, and administrative assistants, we wish you the joy and peace of the season that can only come to us from Jesus himself. Merry Christmas to one and all.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Fr. Joe

We Pray for the Sick

Irene Abad, Paula Bertelloni, Christian Brueck, Fran Caldwell, Dolores Collier, Lee Ann Davito, Lisa Deegan, Desiderio Fernandes, Frank Forte, Ed Koch, Sr. Dominic Marie McDonnell, Joseph Miele, Carol Munkins, David O’Hanlon, John Pagano, Alicia Parent, Joan Pinto, Richard Pinto, Samantha

THIS WEEK’S SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Altar Bread – In memory of Juergen Kleine, req. by Marianne Kleine.

Altar Wine – For deceased members of the Conetta and Cantarella Families, req. by Camille Cantarella.

Blessed Virgin Mary Candle – In memory of Catherine and Frank Marino, req. by Mary & Bruno Macchiavelli & Family.

Sanctuary Candle – In memory of Lee & George Hofmann.



PRAY FOR OUR RECENTLY DECEASED

James M. Walsh

Religious Education News



What a wonderful Christmas Pageant we had here at St. Mary's! We would like to thank the kindergartners and 4th grade students for their performances in the pageant. We would also like to thank 3rd, 5th, and Sunday 6th graders for sharing their beautiful voices

with our parishioners. Lou Scarpa worked with the students and the result was beautiful. Thank you also to our 5th, 6th, and 8th grade volunteers who helped with reading and the lighting of the Advent Wreath.

Special gratitude goes to Angie Girardin for creation of the little angels capes, and to Regina Baker, Meagan Gobo, Kiki Hiletzaris, and Liz Fanelli for their hands on participation with our performers. Special thanks to Maria Hiletzaris and Monica Fenu Placido, our kindergarten and 4th grade catechists.

Our 1st and 2nd graders have been focused on classroom activities. The 2nd graders and their families celebrated the Sacrament of Penance on the first Saturday of December and attended a special Advent Mass on that Sunday.

Our Jr. High (6th and 7th graders) took time out from their Advent and Christmas lessons to make candy cane reindeer for the town food pantry.

Our Confirmation Candidates while keeping up with their regular classes, have participated in seasonal service activities, including Breakfast with Santa. Special thanks to Dr. Pam Derfus, their catechist and to Mr. and Mrs. Claus (Madge and Lenny Conmy).

Thank you to all our catechists and aides who have helped the children of St. Mary's Parish understand the meaning of the Advent season. The teachers have provided the children with activities that have encouraged them to share the Spirit of Christmas with others.

We wish all the children, teens, and their families and our many helpers a healthy and joyous Christmas. It is all of you who make our work so enjoyable.

May you experience the blessings of the Holy Child during this special time of the year.

Gail and Maria

Let's Party with the Three Kings!

All liturgical ministers: Lectors, Ushers, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Children's Choir and Choir of St. Mary Members – Let's get together to celebrate on **January 6th, 2019**, the Feast of the Epiphany, at 1:00 PM at St. Mary's for a light lunch. This is an opportunity to enjoy each other's company and for the parish to show appreciation for all that you do as liturgical ministers.

Please RSVP by January 3rd with Grace at gditzel@stmarycloster.org. Looking forward to it! – Fr. Joe

It's that season again . . .

Sneezing, coughing, scratchy throat, flu – you've got the idea. If you are experience any of these symptoms or not feeling 100%, rather than shake hands a smile or nod of the head works well. Also, it is okay only to receive only the Eucharist and not receive the Precious Blood.

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARY PARISH

Dec. 23:

No – LWC
11:15 AM – Parish Choir meet
12:00 PM – Parish Choir at Mass

Dec. 24:

All Parish Offices Closed
4:15 PM – Parish Choir Meet
5:00 PM – Mass – Children's Choir and the Choir of St. Mary's
10:00 PM – Mass
No – Prayer Shawl Ministry
No – Deepening the Journey

Dec. 25:

All Parish Offices Closed
8:30 AM – Mass
11:00 AM – Mass

Dec. 26:

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM – Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament – Church
No – Morning Scripture Study
No – Evening Scripture Study

Dec. 27:

7:30 PM – Marian / Eucharistic Holy Hour

Dec. 29:

4:15 – 4:45 PM – Reconciliation

Dec. 30:

No – LWC
11:15 AM – Parish Choir meet
12:00 PM – Parish Choir at Mass



Christmas Schedule

Christmas Masses – Christmas Eve, 5:00 PM (with Childrens Choir and the Choir of St. Mary's) and 10:00 PM, **Christmas Day**, 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM.

New Year's – New Year's Eve, 5:00 PM and **New Year's Day**, 10:00 AM.

Sacrament Certificate Requests

For various reasons there are times when one needs to obtain a new current Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation, or Marriage Certificate. When doing so please allow the office at least two weeks time. Thank you.

Beneficial IRA Giving as the Year Ends

If you have a traditional IRA and you are age 70-1/2 or older, you must make a taxable Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA each year to avoid a 50% penalty for not taking the RMD. Sometimes your RMD may also push you into a higher tax bracket, increasing your taxes.

In 2015, Congress passed a permanent rollover law allowing tax payers who have to withdraw money from their IRA's to make a gift directly to charity. Because such a gift counts against your required minimum withdrawal (RMD), making a year-end IRA rollover gift to St Mary's could reduce both your income as well as your taxes.

While you don't receive an income tax deduction for such a gift, you also won't pay any income tax transfer to your of contributing is advantageous to Jersey who have and Local Deduction under the new married couples years old will be standard deduction in lieu of itemizing.



on the income parish. This way particularly residents of New found their State Income Tax limited to \$10,000 tax law. Many over seventy able to take the

By transferring the charitable contribution directly from your traditional IRA, you could receive additional tax savings. Please consider making a year-end IRA gift to beloved St. Mary's. The money must be taken from the IRA account and made directly payable to the parish to do this correctly. Please speak with your accountant or other tax professional about this option and its potential advantages.

As has been reported, St. Mary's is experiencing a deficit. Your extra-generous gift at this time will help her continue to serve and minister. Thank you for all that you do in making the mission of St. Mary's possible.

Parish Groups/Ministries: Share Your Good News & Invite Others

All parish groups and ministries are encouraged to share the good news of their workings, upcoming events, new member welcome, thanks and needs. Please always send a few sentences that can be broadcast in the bulletin, FaceBook and the parish website, pics great too. Even though an event or meeting may be on the parish calendar, a member from the ministry/group should send descriptive info to be broadcast. Please also place regular messages that invite others to attend an event or join a ministry or activity with description, meeting times and location, and contact info. Send all info to Grace at gditzel@stmarycloster.org.

Volunteer Opportunities at St. Mary

Make a difference at St. Mary and have a good time in the process by singing with the Choir of St. Mary. Men are needed. Great group. No singing experience is necessary. Another opportunity is to serve as a *cantor or song leader*. Parishioners in high school and beyond interested in volunteering as a *cantor*, please reach out to Mr. Scarpa to schedule an interview. See Louis after mass or send an e to ministry@stmarycloster.org.

St. Mary's is in need of a parishioner to change the parish announcements on the sign located on High Street. This is not a weekly task, perhaps once or twice a month. It does not entail coming up with the announcements. Please contact Grace at the parish office or email gditzel@stmarycloster.org. Thank you!

Our parish altar linen ministers are responsible for laundering the liturgical linens (purificators, corporals, and towels) used during Mass and baptisms. We need volunteers to help with weekly laundering and ironing. The commitment is one assigned week per month, takes less than one hour, and is an easy way to share your time and talent with the parish. If you can assist please call Chris Hofmann at 201-768-6535. Thank you!



Thank you to all who donated gifts to the Advent giving tree for our friends at New Bridge Medical Center. Here are just some of the many gifts donated by you.

Parish Membership

To be considered an active, participating member of the parish and thus eligible for reduced tuition rates at participating Catholic schools or sacramental sponsorship eligibility, St. Mary's takes into account an individual's participation (attendance) in Mass, and ministry/volunteer involvement. Since weekly offertory envelopes are the primary means of determining if parishioners are "active," we ask you to place your offertory envelope in the collection basket even if you cannot afford to make a monetary stewardship donation. The parish cannot track cash donations in the Sunday collection. *Praying together as a God's family, participating in a ministry to be the hands of Christ and supporting the parish financially are the three meaningful ways we live our Catholic faith!* We Catholics are blessed!

Food Pantry

We no longer have a food pantry. Please do not leave bags of food in the vestibules. You are welcome to bring them down to the Closter food pantry.



Follow and Like St. Mary's

Follow and like St. Mary's on FaceBook. Why? Because the latest news and announcements are posted there and by "liking" St. Mary's we reach more circles of people. www.facebook.com/stmarycloster.

Physical Plant Update

The baptismal font area is complete. The font is now placed in a more dignified and logical location. We have a dedicated area for baptisms to occur, with family and friends able to gather around during the baptism. The holy oils used for anointings at baptisms and other sacraments are located near the font. The Pascal candle (Easter candle) is nearby, making the connection of the light of Christ and new life. The font being located by the entrance to the church enables the blessing of the body during funeral mass, further making the connection from baptism to resurrection.

The next issue that needs attention is interior church lighting. The first 5 pews are very poorly lit and the fixtures that contain spotlights for the high altar are outdated. The plan is to replace these fixtures and add more lights for the front pews. Also, the main vestibule light fixtures will be repaired and perhaps some additional lighting added over the music ministry area. The parish has some funds reserved from the Living Stones Campaign to cover these upgrades.

The former convent is still without a tenant. Since the Religious Education offices have been moved to the lower rectory, we have realized significant savings on utilities (cooling, internet and phone) over the summertime. The convent remains heated throughout the winter and staff regularly checks on the building. Pray that a tenant comes soon as the parish very much needs this rental income.

The St. Mary Finance Council has agreed that any projects in the parish which may cost over \$5,000 will require detailed bids from three contractors.

Thank you to all parishioners who support beloved St. Mary's financially and offer their gifts of time and talent as we manage the physical plant.

ANNOUNCED SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Weekly offerings of: Altar Bread, Altar Wine, Blessed Virgin Mary Candle and Sanctuary Candle are available throughout **2019**.

2019 Women's Day of Reflection / Catholic Men's Conference

The dates for the 2019 Women's Day of Reflection is on Saturday, **March 9th** and the Catholic Men's Conference is on Saturday, **March 16th**. Both events will be held at Seton Hall University, have English and Spanish tracks and include Breakfast and Lunch. Registration fee is \$25.00. Time of events is 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

Some of the advantages of attending these events are:

- Listen to speakers who inspire us to learn, love and live our faith better
- Times of prayer and worship
 - Holy Mass
 - Holy Hour
 - Adoration Chapel
- Availability of confession
- Meet and fellowship with like-minded Catholics
- Help others to experience the faith
- Learn about ministries of the Archdiocese
- Catholic gifts and books for sale

More information can be found soon at www.rcan.org/womenscommission or www.NJCatholicMen.org.

Support Groups

Many who hunger for God's consolation after the loss of a loved one, separation or divorce or other circumstance will find that faith based programs can offer them hope and comfort. A listing of parish support groups are now available on the Family Life Office webpage. Currently, the Archdiocese of Newark has over 60 different types of support groups ministering to an estimate of 1,200 people each year. The types of groups include: general bereavement, bereaved parents, separated & divorced, single parents & same sex attraction. To find a support group near you, please go to: www.rcan.org/about-parish-based-support-groups-0 and select the group type from the menu on the right. To make updates to our list please contact Lauren Egan at 973-497-4327 or Lauren.Egan@rcan.org.

Marriage, Divorce & Church Annulment: What Does the Church Really Teach? Thursday, **January 10th**, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. All are welcome to this presentation followed by a Q & A session. Maybe you have asked the questions, What is Marriage? Is annulment just "catholic divorce"? Can divorced people receive the Eucharist? Or maybe you would just like information & support. **Presented by:** Lauren Egan, BA, CADC Assoc. Dir. of Family Life Office Trained Pastoral Advocate. **RSVP:** <https://conta.cc/2RWHBUM>

Workshop on Divorce & Family Law Thursday, **January 17th**, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Allan Scazafabo, Jr., a Catholic, Matrimonial Law Attorney & Alyssa A. DeFuria, Family Law Attorney will both present on the "nuts and bolts" of the divorce process. Resources with be given, including articles and handouts related to divorce & family law. The talk will end with an open Q & A session. **Presented by:** Allan Scazafabo, Jr., Matrimonial Law Attorney.

Location for both talks: Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament, 28 Livingston Avenue, Roseland, NJ.

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