

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW
Stewardship Report – Treasure

Regular Collection-12/18/22 \$3,470.00
Retirement Fund for Religious – 12/18/22 \$67.00
On-line giving will be reported in next week's bulletin

If you are unable to attend Mass, weekly collection envelopes may be mailed directly to the Rectory office at 33 Unionville Avenue, Sussex, NJ 07461. Collection envelopes may also be dropped in the metal milk box located to the left of the front door of the rectory.
 Thank you for your generosity!

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN AS OF 12/12/2022

Please support St. Monica's Church by contributing to our Annual Campaign. Forms are located at the Church Hall Exits and at the Rectory Office. *We thank you for your generosity!*

Pledges to Date: \$20,220.00
Paid to date: \$16,986.67



The Sanctuary Lamp this week is in Memory of: All Deceased Family & Friends

Given by: The Vernacchio Family

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

12/26	MON:	9:00am	People of our Parish
12/27	TUES:	9:00am	Elsie Rodriguez Dymitr Szajnoga Rozalia Chrobak
12/28	WED:	NO MASS	TODAY
12/29	THUR:	9:00am	People of our Parish
12/30	FRI:	9:00am	People of our Parish
12/31	SAT:	5:00pm	Joan Yocamelli Deceased Members of Masson & Kreckel Families Hilary & John Battaglia Charles Jansky Mary Wells Joseph & Benedetta Cosentino
01/1	SUN:	8:30am 10:30am	People of our Parish People of our Parish

ST. MONICA'S CHURCH – Contact Information

Phone: 973-875-4521 **Fax:** 973-875-7538

Parish Office Hours: 9:30am-1:30pm Mon. Tue. Thurs. and Fri.

THE PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED ON WEDNESDAYS

Website: www.stmonicasussex.org

Email: stmonica@ptd.net

MASS TIMES:

SATURDAY: 5:00 PM

SUNDAY: 8:30 AM, 10:30 AM

WEEKDAY MASSES: MON., TUES, THURS, FRI. AT 9:00AM (NO MASS ON WEDNESDAYS)

NATIVITY OF THE LORD: CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 25, 2022



Merry Christmas!

With great longing, we have been preparing our hearts and our homes for this day on which we celebrate the birth of our Messiah and Savior. We recall that glorious night when the Blessed Mother bore Jesus into an expectant world, realizing that Jesus is also born in our hearts and in our world here and now, made present through one another and in the Eucharist we celebrate. May this "good news of great joy that will be for all the people" continue to be incarnated in our lives and our world.

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WEEKLY/MONTHLY PARISH EVENTS

HELPING HANDS- The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 7:30 pm in the Church Hall. New members are always welcome.

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SPECIAL DEVOTIONS AT ST. MONICA'S

Recitation of the Rosary – Come join us every Monday at 4:00 pm in the Church to recite the Rosary for peace in our nation and around the world.

Chaplet of the Divine Mercy – every Friday after the 9:00 A.M. Mass

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament –First Friday of the month after the 9:00 A.M. Mass until 10:00 A.M.

READINGS FOR THIS WEEK



Sunday - Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20.

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

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

Tuesday – 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Wednesday – 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Mt 2:13-18

Thursday – 1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35

Friday – Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17;

Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

Saturday – 1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18



PARISH REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Are you new to our parish? If so, welcome! Do you wish to register? If you are attending Mass and using our blue "blank" visitor envelopes and wish to receive our weekly envelopes in the mail, please register with us. There are blank registration forms on the table near the Church exits. Please fill it out and give it to Fr. Jan after Mass or drop it in the collection basket.

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR DECEASED, ILL OR HOSPITALIZED



If you have a prayer request for someone who is deceased, ill or hospitalized, please enter the name of the person in the prayer request book located in the Church Hall. Each week, the prayer list is placed on the altar.



YOUTH MINISTRY BAKE SALE

St. Monica's Youth Ministry's Bake Sale was a huge success!! They raised \$505 to give to St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Thank you to our Youth Ministry students for a job well done and to all our parishioners who helped support them.



ST. MONICA'S ANNUAL PARISH COLLECTION

We are very grateful for the generosity shown by so many to our **ANNUAL PARISH COLLECTION**. If you have not yet had an opportunity to return your pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. Every gift is welcome and sincerely appreciated. Thank you!

PLEASE NOTE: THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2022 AND MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2023. MASS WILL BE HELD AS USUAL ON BOTH DAYS AT 9:00 AM.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke 2: 11-14

HIS WORD TODAY

by Rev. William J. Reilly - Most Holy Name Catholic Church, Garfield, NJ

The Nativity of the Lord - December 25, 2022

"Beloved: When the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, He saved us..."

This was the message of St. Paul to Titus.

In the joy of this season, as we recall the most significant event in human history, we might tend to forget, that the Father sent Jesus to save us and give us new life in Him. May we pause for a moment, not to visit the scene of Bethlehem, but consider what was our need and the Father's loving response, and our need today for His saving grace.

We were separated from God, but at this moment He bent down from heaven, sending us Jesus as our Savior. Today we are invited to respond to the Father's gift in gratitude and accept the greatest Christmas gift ever. Bring the meaning of this day to someone else.



CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS 2022

NEW YEAR'S EVE MASS

(Solemnity of Mary)

Saturday, December 31st – 5:00pm

SOLEMNITY OF MARY

Sunday, January 1st – 8:30 am and 10:30 am

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Saturday, January 7th - 5:00 pm

Sunday, January 8th - 8:30 am and 10:30 am





I wish to thank all the volunteers who helped make St. Monica's so beautiful for the celebration of Christmas, especially those who helped with decorating the church, setting up the inside and outside Nativity scenes, purchasing and arranging the poinsettias, cleaning the church, and all those who helped in any way.

I also thank the Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, and Ushers who gave extra time to serve at the Masses.

Finally, I thank our parishioners for the Christmas Flower Memorial donations which made it possible to purchase the poinsettias for the altar and for everyone's generosity during the Christmas season.

May God bless you and grant you a happy and healthy New Year!

Fr. Jan



Giotto's Star of Bethlehem

We have received many compliments from our parishioners regarding the beautiful tapestry, entitled "**Adoration of the Magi**", which is displayed on the wall behind the altar. One may ask, why is there a comet in the painting and not a star?

In the year 1303, Enrico Scrovegni, a businessman of Padua, Italy, commissioned construction of a chapel. The building is known today as Arena Chapel. It is decorated with frescoes by the artist Giotto di Bondone, showing scenes from the lives of Mary and Christ. One of these, named "**Adoration of the Magi**", is famous for the special nature of its Christmas Star. The object in the sky above the stable is not the traditional many-pointed star with rays shining down on the Christ child, but a very realistic looking comet.

Roberta Olson, an art historian at Wheaton College in Norton, MA, argues that the "star" in Giotto's painting is Comet Halley (Scientific American, May 1979). Other well known astronomers agree that Halley was probably Giotto's inspiration. Comet Halley appeared 1301, only a few years before Giotto began his Italian frescoes. The appearance of Giotto's comet is strikingly similar to photographs of Comet Halley made during the 1910 apparation. In Adoration of the Magi, Giotto proves himself a careful observer of the sky, and gives us the first ever rendering of a comet that is almost photographically accurate.

Comets had long been associated with births of kings. Several early Christian theologians had assumed that a comet prefigured the birth of Christ. Therefore, the beautiful object appearing low in the western sky served as a perfect model for the Christmas star.

On March 13, 1986, a space probe launched by the European Space Agency passed within 400 miles of Comet Halley. It was the ninth visit of the comet to our solar system neighborhood since 1301, and the 26th visit since the time of Christ. A camera aboard the spacecraft radioed back to Earth amazingly detailed photographs of its nucleus...a potato-shaped object, ten miles long, marked with hills and valleys and letting off clouds of gas. The spacecraft was named Giotto, to honor the pioneering artist who gave us the first portrait of Comet Halley in his famous artwork, "**Adoration of the Magi**", which graces our altar during this Christmas season.



From the Desk of Fr. Jan:

At Christmas we celebrate what we have been waiting for in “joyful hope” for the whole season of Advent! We celebrate that day when Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, became one of us and one with us, finding a home in our homes and in our hearts. At Christmas we commemorate the incarnation of God on earth!

Why did God have to come in person to enter our world? In order to repay a debt he did not owe because we owed a debt (original sin) which we were unable to pay. God sought us out in our dire need and, finding us, chose to dwell among us. The birth of Jesus Christ is the incarnation of God's love and desire to save us, to be with us and to have us be with him. But from what has Jesus saved us? The Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles make it clear that Jesus has come to save us from the power of darkness, and from slavery to sin. Sin enslaves us to the power of darkness and evil, and results in death. Sin is not just a rejection of God's laws and teachings, but sin is a rejection of God's love, His goodness, and what's more, sin is a rejection of a life united with God who is our only source of life. Without God there is no life there is only the misery of darkness and death. So God, seeing our misery, promised to save us. He did so by sending His Son, Jesus, to become one of us, who took all of our sins upon Himself, and after paying the price of sin which is death, Christ conquered the power of sin and death and restored life.

So Every Christmas when we celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus, we commemorate the birth of the Savior of the world. When we see Christ as he truly is - the Savior of the world - Christmas comes alive with celebration of love and joy, peace and hope that never ends.

The gift of Christmas is Christ Himself. And it's not only once a year that he makes himself available, He is there for us always and in all ways. So let us always strive to share this message of salvation to all and to spread his consoling love especially to those who fail to recognize what Christmas truly means.

The Christmas image of Jesus is that of a light shining in the darkness. At Christmas we celebrate the fact that when Jesus entered our darkened world light and hope also entered. What Jesus was to the world of his time, He wants us to be to the world of our time. We too must be a beam of light in the midst of darkness. We, too, must be a ray of hope in the midst of despair.

Christmas is an invitation for each one of us to be for the world what Jesus was to his world. Like the Son of God, we are born to love and to serve as he did. Do we truly love our neighbor? Do we really want to help others? Each one of us has something valuable to give. May each one of us learn how to love our neighbor and to use things in service of that love. May we learn from Jesus to relate to one another in the power of love and not in the love of power.

If Jesus is to be born into today's world, it must be through us. We must be the beam of light in the midst of darkness. We must be the ray of hope in the midst of despair.

On behalf of our entire staff, I wish you and your family a Blessed Christmas. May your Christmas be filled with love, peace, and joy.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL