

St. Joseph of Stratford National Catholic Church



February 4-5, 2023 – Septuagesima

Parish Contacts

PASTOR
Fr. Tom Walsh

CHAIRPERSON
Jeanine May

*VICE
CHAIRPERSON*
Dee Smith

*Financial
Secretary*
Barbara
Chernesky

*Office
Administrator*
Lisa Vasas

Dear Parishioners,

“Before everyone are life and death, whichever they choose will be given them.”

We value the gift of free will. To exercise that gift, we are blessed with the capacity for reason, and hopefully we use that reason to make wise choices. Unfortunately there are times when we do not choose wisely. The verse cited above from the First Reading (Sirach 15:15-20) underscores the great responsibility each one of us bears in life. To choose life or death? We must choose wisely.

Grace and peace,
Fr. Tom

Mass Times

Vigil Mass – Saturday 4:00pm Sunday morning Mass – 9:30am.

1300 Stratford Road, Stratford, CT 06615 / (203) 377-9901
www.saintjosephsofstratford.org / sjosparishpncc@outlook.com



TODAY’S READINGS: SEE CENTER INSERT

SUNDAY MASS INTENTION: For the repose of the soul of †Michael Chernesky, given by daughter Barbara

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We remember in our prayers Jane Pelland, Joe Pelland, Wanda Cople, Nancy Anzalone, Jean Macionus, Fr. Henry Smolinski & Margo, Rich Lasecki, Joyce Bresh, Edmond Bresh, Helen Reynolds, Helen Popp, Florence Rasmussen, Robin Lupinski, Judy DiLorenzo, Frank Bonitatebus, Lizzie Mast, Carol Murdzia, Dom Zumbo, Tom Nuckowski, Greg Baktis, Martha Lesnick, Bill Homa, Jesse Matthews, Chip & Patrice Matthews, Christopher Davis (Sirois)

For those new to our church (and even those who aren’t!)



To follow along with the Mass, begin on **page 63** in the Mass booklet. Father will announce which page to turn to for the Canon at the appropriate time and where to pick up the service following the Canon.

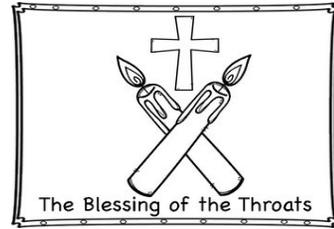
And please remember – there is no eating or drinking inside the church proper (small bottles of water excepted).

SPECIAL MASS INTENTIONS

If you would like to sponsor a Mass to memorialize a loved one or celebrate a special occasion, please contact the office at 203-377-9901 or email sjosparishpncc@outlook.com. Intentions will be listed in the “What’s Happening” section of the bulletin, marked with a †. If you do not see it listed there, please contact the office.

Blessing of Throats during Sunday Mass

In commemoration of the Feast of St. Blaise, patron saint of throats and intercessor for throat diseases and ailments, Father will be blessing the throats of the congregation during this Sunday's Mass.



Polish Dinner – make plans now!



On Saturday, 4 March 2023, the church will be holding a Polish Dinner in the hall after Mass. Food will be available to eat in or order for take out.



The menu will consist of stuffed cabbage, pierogi, kielbasa, green beans, and a dessert. Take out orders will be ready to pick up between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. Sit down meals will be available at 6:00 p.m.



Dinner is by reservation only – both eat-in and take out. Dinners are \$15.00 each. Please contact the office to make reservations so that we know how much to prepare. Remember to specify if you are eating in or taking out. Deadline for reservations is 22 February 2023. No walk-ins or last minute take out orders (except for those who've already reserved who require the meal to be taken out instead).

Coffee & Catechism – after Sunday Mass

The next Coffee & Catechism session will take place Sunday after Mass in the classrooms. Grab your coffee and roll and join us for: "The Last Four Things – Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell."



Prayer Blanket Project Update Keep up the good work!

Last Sunday two blankets were completed last week after Mass. Stop by the tables in the hall after Mass today to work on this week's blankets! It doesn't take long and is easy to do.



If you don't understand the impact these blankets have had, listen to the stories Father passes on during Mass of those who've received them. At the moment, we are the **ONLY** group providing these items of comfort to the entire hospital. Your participation is absolutely appreciated by not only the recipients, but all those in the hospital who try to comfort those in need.

Of course, **we are still collecting donations toward more fabric.**

The fabric costs approximately \$40 per blanket. There is a donation box at the back of the church, on the table near the bulletins. **If you would like to donate in memory of a loved one, please contact the office** so we can try to tailor the fabric purchased for that blanket to your loved one's interests (e.g. making a blanket with airplanes or clouds on it in memory of someone who adored flying or choosing fabric of a specific color for the loved one's favorite color).

Thank you so much for your continued support of this worthwhile project!

READINGS FOR SEPTUAGESIMA

First Reading

Sir 15: 15-20

A Reading from the book of the prophet Sirach

If you choose, you can keep the commandments; loyalty is doing the will of God. Set before you are fire and water; to whatever you choose, stretch out your hand. Before everyone are life and death, whichever they choose will be given them. Immense is the wisdom of the LORD; mighty in power, he sees all things. The eyes of God behold his works, and he understands every human deed. He never commands anyone to sin, nor shows leniency toward deceivers.

This is the Word of the Lord

R: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

PS. 119: 1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

R: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord.

Blessed those whose way is blameless,
who walk by the law of the Lord.

Blessed those who keep his testimonies,
who seek him with all their heart.

R: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord.

You have given them the command
to observe your precepts with care.

May my ways be firm
in the observance of your statutes!

R: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord.

Be kind to your servant that I may live,
that I may keep your word.

Open my eyes to see clearly
the wonders of your law.

R: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord.

Lord, teach me the way of your statutes;
I shall keep them with care.

Give me understanding to keep your law,
to observe it with all my heart.

R: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord.

Second Reading

1 Cor 2: 6-10

A Reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Yet we do speak a wisdom to those who are mature, but not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written:

“What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard,
and what has not entered the human heart,
what God has prepared for those who love him,”

this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

R: Thanks be to God.

C. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory.

R: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory.

C. Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

R: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory.

THE GOSPEL

Mt 5: 17-37

C: The Lord be with you.

R: And also with you.

C: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

R: Glory be to You, O Lord.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against

you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him.

Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.' But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.' But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the evil one.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

R: Praise be to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Altar Flowers



A wonderful way to remember a special person or occasion as well as beautify the church. Contact Fr. Tom or Dee Smith if you wish to donate flowers for a particular week. Also, please let them know if the flowers will be in memory or celebration of someone so the donation can be acknowledged. There are vases in the cabinets in the right side altar room if you want to donate flowers for the side altars.

Please note: Flowers are not permitted on the altar during **Lent** or **Advent**.

Bible Study – next session announced



With the current Bible study session ending, we are excited to announce the next session. Entitled “**Traversing the Narrative Arc of Scripture**”, it will begin on 7 March 2023 and continue for six weeks. The group meets at 6:30 p.m. in the classrooms and begins with a potluck meal, so both mind and body are fortified. All are welcome to join!

Another seasonal favorite to resume

In a few weeks, Lent begins and with it come the additional services to assist your spiritual journey to Easter, such as Bitter Lamentations and Stations of the Cross. This year, getting back to pre-pandemic practice, we will hold a potluck dinner on Fridays before Stations of the Cross. Set the time aside now – dinner at 6:00 p.m. followed by Stations at 6:30 p.m.!

Items for the bulletin

Deadline for submitting items for the bulletin is Thursday. Items turned in after Thursday are not guaranteed inclusion in that Sunday’s bulletin.

Food pantry in need of restocking



According to Father Skip – the person in charge of the food pantry at Blessed Sacrament – prior to COVID the food pantry regularly served 150 – 200 people each week. Since the pandemic, that number has risen drastically to over **500 people per week**. Please consider donating additional non-perishable food items, leaving them in the collection bins in the foyer, to help stock the shelves.

Help feed needy children



No Child Should Be Hungry

The collection of single-serving food items for the children Sterling House helps was so successful, we are going to continue it on a monthly basis. On the last Sunday of the month, there will be a special container designated for Sterling House and the children experiencing food insecurity in our community. Your participation, no matter how small, will be greatly appreciated!

Want to make prayer shawls?

Or lap blankets? Do you crochet or knit? Do you want to learn? Learn a new skill or resurrect an old one! We’re looking at starting a group to meet in the late morning on either Tuesday or Thursday for about an hour to work on simple prayer shawls and lap blankets for the hospital. Experience not necessary, enthusiasm is! Anyone can participate, men or women. If you are interested, please contact the office.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR CHURCH

‡**Sunday, 5 February 2023** – Memorial Mass for †Michael Chernesky, given by daughter Barbara

Sunday, 5 February 2023 – Scout Sunday

Sunday, 5 February 2023 – Coffee & Catechism – **POSTPONED from 29 January**

Wednesday, 15 February 2023 – Serving at the Lord's Kitchen, 5:00 p.m.

‡**Sunday, 19 February 2023** – Memorial Mass for †Justin Federici, given by Linda Chehy

Wednesday, 22 February 2023 – Ash Wednesday. 6:30 p.m. Mass

Saturday, 4 March 2023 – Polish Dinner. 6:00 p.m. eat-in

Saturday, 13 May 2023 – Confirmation of parish youth at 2:00 p.m.

Wanted – sturdy cardboard boxes

Sterling House has agreed to take the old china dishes from the church kitchen, but we need to transport it to them. To that end, we need sturdy cardboard boxes, capable of holding a good amount of weight. If you have any to get rid of, please bring them to the church and drop them off with the office. We have received a few so far, but there is a lot of china to pack up and we need some more boxes.



Thank you to those who have already brought boxes in!

Information table in foyer



As you've noticed, there is an information table in the foyer with all kinds of great things for you. The latest additions to the table are flyers for the 4 March Polish dinner and free copies of the publication "Magnificat", which contains prayers, daily readings, and interesting articles to help you in your Catholic journey. There are also still 2023 calendars – take as many as you'd like – and various brochures or flyers as they become available.

POLISH DINNER

March 4th

Reservations Only

Call by: 2/25/23

*Kielbasa - Stuffed Cabbage - Pierogi
Green Beans - Salad - Rye Bread
Dessert - Drink*

Take Out: 5pm - Dine In: 6pm

\$15.00

203.377.9901

saintjosephsofstratford.org