

Saint Cecilia Parish

90 Church Street
Rockaway, New Jersey 07866

Parish Office: 973-627-0313 Website: st-cecilia.org — Office: stcec@optonline.net Fax: 973-627-4811
To Contact: Fr. Zig: Ext. 12 or speplowski@optonline.net
Fr. Matt: Ext 15 or frmateuszdarlak@gmail.com
School: 973-627-6003 CCD Office: 973-627-0313 Ext. 17

Rev. Sigmund Peplowski
PASTOR

Rev. Mateusz Darlak
PAROCHIAL VICAR

Mrs. Janet Maulbeck
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
YOUTH PROTECTION &
SAFE ENVIRONMENT
COORDINATOR

Mr. James Clancy
DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

Mr. Charles Linnell
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Mrs. Diane Boykow
CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR
STAFF ASSISTANT

Mrs. Kelly Cacella
PRINCIPAL



CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY

All Catholic Churches in the United States require from Catholics serving as a Godparent for Baptism or a sponsor for Confirmation a certificate of eligibility. This document certifies that the Godparent/sponsor is a registered member of the parish, attends Holy Mass, approaches the sacraments regularly and contributes to the support of the Church via the Sunday offering envelope program or "WeShare". It is the responsibility of the individual to meet these requirements as listed in the Code of Canon Law, #874.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Arrangements for the Sacrament of Baptism can be made by calling Fr. Matt at extension 15.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Arrangements are to be made at least ONE YEAR in advance. The date should not be set until the priest has been consulted.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

Urgent calls will be attended to at any time of the day or night. If there is anyone at home or in the hospital who cannot get to Mass and the Sacraments because of illness or old age, please inform one of the priests or call the Parish Office @ 973-627-0313.

EMERGENCY PHONE:
862-251-3914

MASSES

Saturday: 4:30 pm, 7:00 pm
Sunday: 8:00 am, 9:15 am
10:45 am and 12:15 pm
5:00 pm (Vietnamese)

Holydays

Vigil 4:30 pm
6:30 am, 8:00 am & 7:00 pm

Weekday Schedule:

Monday - Friday
6:30 am & 8:00 am
Saturday
8:00 am followed by Novena

Confessions

Saturday @ 3:00—4:00 pm &
6:15-6:45 pm
Monday during Holy Hour
7:00—8:00 pm

Ms. Susan Brennan
TRUSTEE

Mr. James Gallagher
TRUSTEE

NOVENA: OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL AND OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Saturday morning after the 8:00 am Mass

HOLY HOUR : Monday @ 7:00 pm (Sept. to June)

OCIA—ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION— FOR

ADULTS:

Please contact Sr. Diane — sdmoughan@gmail.com

ROSARY PRAYER GROUP: Monday through Sat. @ 7:30 am

FEMININE GENIUS PROJECT: 1st & 3rd Saturday of the month at 8:00 pm in the parish office.

ST. JOSEPH MEN'S GROUP: 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month at 6:00 am in the parish office.

PADRE PIO PRAYER GROUP: 1st Wednesday of the month; 10:00 am in the church (Sept. to June)

ST. MONICA NOVENA: Last Saturday after 8:00 am Mass.

Parish Office Hours

Monday thru Thursday: 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Friday: 8:30 am to 2:00 pm
Closed for lunch: 12:00 to 1:00

Monday, March 31, Lenten Weekday

6:30 am — Barbara Carollo req. by the Sierchio Family

8:00 am — Stephen Haran, Sr., req. by Peggy McKinney

Tuesday, April 1, Lenten Weekday

6:30 am — Special Intention

8:00 am — Jean Asti req. by Carol & Gary McGotty

Wednesday, April 2, Saint Francis of Paola, Hermit

6:30 am — Maureen Graziano req. by Sean Connolly

8:00 am — April Southern req. by Sophie Boylan

Thursday, April 3, Lenten Weekday

6:30 am — Thomas Parker req. by Ellen Shapiro

8:00 am — Mary Ellen Lusardi req. by Ann Marie Tekmen

Friday, April 4, Saint Isidore, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

6:30 am — Kathy Deo req. by her husband, Pat

8:00 am — Zenobia Hudson req. by Sophie Boylan

Saturday, April 5, Saint Vincent Ferrer, Priest

8:00 am — Deceased Members of the Rosary Society

Sunday, April 6, Fifth Sunday of Lent

4:30 pm — Pauline Brussell req. by the McDonnell Family

Joseph Bartholomew req. by his Wife & Daughter

7:00 pm — Joanna & Walter Lech req. by Dianna & John Sullivan

8:00 am — Maria Pangilinan Salazar req. by McDonnell Family

9:15 am — Robert Fitzgerald req. by Lillian & Ismael Franqui

Rose Elias req. by the Cullenly Family

10:45 am — Janice Ann McClain, Birthday Remembrance, req. by Kevin, Christian, Craig & Franklin

12:15 pm — Hernan Pazos Giron req. by the Sena & Molinari Families

ST. CECILIA CHURCH COLLECTION GOALS**Week Ending : March 23, 2025**

Collection—Checks & Cash	\$ 8,079.00
WeShare Electronic Giving	\$ 4,446.80
Total Weekly Collection	\$ 12,525.80

Yearly Collection Goal (BUDGET)	\$ 785,000.00
Weekly Goal	\$ 14,313.73

Weekly Collection Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (1,787.93)
Year To Date Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 10,218.49

St. Cecilia Church**2024 DMA Goal: \$42,885****Cash received as of March 10, 2025: \$91,100****Amount over-goal: \$48,215****March rebate: \$24,108**

We are thankful for your consistent stewardship. ©JPPC

Our Condolences to the Family of
Carmella Mildred Donatoni
 Eternal Rest Grant to her Lord



*The Sanctuary Candle burning on our altar
 this week is in loving memory of*
James & Joan Lenahan
Requested by Family

PRAY FOR THE SICK AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

Ethan Chandra, Dean Wayne Campbell, Doris Cusick, Jane Gorcica, Sam Sessa, Karen Niles, Noel Wadleigh, David Cicchine, Teresa D'Atria, Derek Bascharow, Debbie Malc, Grace McDermott, Joe Horvath, Jr., Elvira Bugaoan, Owen Peter Byrne, Tia Maddaloni, Mason Walker Steussing, Susan Mejia, Derek Bascharow, Jim Rattay, Tom Hull, Kathleen Fazio, Kristin Wich, Kyle Johnson, Kate Darlington, Jake Michael Miraldi, Cheryl Anne Bornemann, Sean Nolan, Maryann Hughes, Peggy Eileen Miers, Ray Kennedy, Richard Corcoran, Madison Rose Leslie, Demetrius Barbee, Frances Finn, Dorothy Murray, Kimberly Dugan, Gale Sessa, Mike Murray, Michael Turner, Ruben Lorenzo, Michael Alvarez, Mina Simmons-Jones, Joe Maulbeck, Mary Merz, Patricia Smith Schulman, Vincent Fortunato, Joyce Turner, Tom Cumiskey, Dennis O'Brien, Steven Simmons, Ariel, James DiStasio, Marty Mackin, Brian Bosworth, Dennis Dilger, Robyne LaGrotta, Christopher Darlak, Frieda Solow, Claudia Fontanella, Claire Wasacz, Emilio Viola, Martha Salvessen, Ramiro Hinojosa, Jimmy Buckley, Clare Desmond, Craig Huffman, George Stitik, Stephen Goordman, Cecilia Donofrio, Deidra Zink, Anthony Pane, Victoria Zuber, Keith Newman, Francis Sanchez, Raymond Fullam, John Sandelli, Alan Zenkert, Fran Gatzke, Bob Nielsen, Gert Taylor, Walter Zelinski, Clo Callahan, Michael McClain, David Saggioli, Michael Hafke, Tyler Bascharow, Kevin R. Bruno, II, Jeremiah O'Brien, Lanie Bruno, Joan Apgar, Richard Sala, Richard Cortese, Kira Woyce, Anthony D'Alessio, Colin Brown, Katherine Lynn, Sophie Boylan, Michael Gatzke, Philip Colombrito, Esperanza Vertucci, Molly Mack, Michele Murray, Jimmy Olgeluie, Mark Howarth, Logan Mattessich, Harry Lusardi, Carmela Cragan, Bob Libak.



The people of St. Cecilia Parish are asked to pray for the following people serving our country in the armed services: **SmE3 Andrew Clifford,**

Joseph Giannetti US Navy, Lance Corporal Dennis Wuest, Capt. Kelley E. Robbins, Pvt USMC, Diego Usma, Major Glenn E. Martinez, Sgt. Brian Whalen, Capt. Anthony Odierno, Cpl. Kong V. Nguyen, Cpl. Jim Van Valen, LCPL Anthony Eresman, Sgt. Paul J. Willson, PFC Cano Janeth, Sgt. Bob Autrey, Col. William Paliwada, Sgt 1st Class (E7) Sam Colon, PFC Marylyn Rivera-Sachez, Cpl. Edward C. Thompson, Major Kevin M. Nash, Lt. Amy Cronin, Col. John L. Medeiros, Jr., Sgt. Daniel Healy, Marine Keith Leitner, Sgt. Spencer Lopez, PFC Taryn Kemp, Jeffrey Braunhausen, E7 Joseph Grimsey, Bill Maloney, Greg Bloete, Gian Carlo Bruzzese, Spc. Christopher Little, PFC Brittany Martindell, PO1 (E6) Matthew Fitzgerald, SA Justin C. White, Matthew & Daniel Rosica, Mark Leonard, Sr. Armn. Ashley Valetta, Sgt. John Wisnofsky, Cpl. T.J. Finn, Sgt. Kristopher Faber, Capt. Vincent Presto, Airman First Class William Kussler, Spc. Gregory Villaneuva, PVT Jack L. Gatzke, US Army, ENS Timothy G. Smith, US Navy, We ask God the Father of us all, through the intercession of St. Michael the Archangel, to protect all the men and women in our Armed Forces, to bless them in their efforts toward bringing peace and justice to our world. May they be brought back safely to those they love.

580-St. Cecilia

STATIONS OF THE CROSS – The Way of the Cross is prayed every Friday during the season of Lent in our parish. The service follows the 8 o'clock morning Mass and takes place again in the evening at 7 o'clock. Let us join together in prayer as we recall the suffering our Lord endured for our salvation.

LENTEN LUNCHESES – The annual Lenten Lunches sponsored by the Rockaway Ecumenical Clergy Association will take place every Friday during Lent. The program takes place at the First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall beginning with lunch at 12 Noon followed by a presentation given by a different clergy person each week.

BREAD AND SOUP – Every Thursday evening during Lent the “Bread and Soup” program will take place in Hayes Hall beginning at 6:30 with the serving of a variety of soups (and bread) in the spirit of Lenten fasting. This is followed by the viewing of the series “Oremus” produced by Ascension Press on the topics of prayer, one of the disciplines of Lent. We conclude with a short time of sharing and Evening Prayer by 8 o'clock. Please join us for this adult faith formation opportunity.

MUSIC MINISTRY – I am happy to announce the return of Chuck Linnell as the music minister at our parish. Chuck stepped away from the position for a few months and during his absence we were served by Allison Erwin and Nik Brown. I am grateful to both of them for the service they gave to our parish and pray that the Lord will richly bless them. – Father Zig

LENTEN PENANCE SERVICE - 8 priests will be with us for the Lenten penance service which will take place on Wednesday evening, April 16th beginning at 7 o'clock. This will be the final opportunity to go to confession prior to the Easter celebration. The sacrament of penance is also available every Monday evening from 7 to 8:30 during the season of Lent.

Church Regulations Regarding Fast and Abstinence: Abstinence from meat (beast or fowl) is to be observed by all Catholics fourteen years old and older on Ash Wednesday and on all the Fridays of Lent. This obligation prohibits the eating of meat, but not eggs, milk products, or condiments of any kind, even though made from animal fat. Fasting means limiting oneself to one full meal on a given fast day. Catholics who are eighteen years of age but not yet fifty-nine are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On fast days, two additional smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength. However, the two smaller meals together may not equal one full meal. Moreover, eating solid foods between meals on fast days is not permitted.

JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE – His Excellency Bishop Sweeney has designated SAINT BERNARD CHURCH (22 St. Bernards Drive in Mount Hope) as a designated pilgrim site for the Diocese of Paterson. Pilgrims are welcome on Monday evenings for Holy Mass at 6:30, followed by Holy Hour and Confessions. A plenary indulgence is granted to pilgrims. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, calls all Christians to become pilgrims of hope. This is a virtue which must be sourced above all in the grace of God and in the fullness of His mercy. A plenary indulgence is given to those who are: *truly repentant; free from any affection for sin; moved by a spirit of charity; receive the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist; and pray for the intentions of Pope Francis (1 Our Father, 1 Hail Mary and 1 Glory be...)*. A plenary indulgence is the full remission of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. This jubilee grace can be applied in suffrage to the souls in Purgatory through pilgrimage, whose works of mercy and penance, and visits to a Jubilee designated shrine or church, such as Saint Bernard's.

RICE BOWL – Our Lenten alms project is the RICE BOWL sponsored by Catholic Relief Services. Rice bowls will be available in the church vestibule for you to take home and place on our kitchen-dining room table as a reminder of the fasting and abstinence which is part of our Lenten observance. Money which you would normally spend on snacks and other non essential food should be placed in the rice bowl and at the conclusion of Lent (Easter Sunday) brought to the church. The alms collected from the rice bowls is used to feed people throughout the world, especially in parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where food insecurity is a serious issue. Alms giving is one of the major disciplines of the holy season of Lent.

'THE CHOSEN' AT AMC – The 5th season of the widely acclaimed series, “The Chosen” will be shown in countries throughout the world in local theaters. The AMC Theater at the Rockaway Mall will serve as our local opportunity to view Season 5 which will be shown in segments, March 28th-April 17th. Please check with the theater for additional information or go on line to Fathom Entertainment. This will be a great reflection as we enter into the sacred time we call HOLY WEEK.

FIRST THURSDAY: The Sacramental Life: *Source of Grace and Hope—April 3rd: Anointing of the Sick: “Comfort and Hope” - Come and join us for our First Thursday Retreat!*

9:00 am—Arrival Coffee and

9:30 am—Opening Prayer, short talk on monthly theme

10:45 am—Eucharistic Adoration time for personal prayer/ reflection and opportunity for confession

11:50 am—End of Adoration—Preparation for Mass

12:00 pm—Eucharistic Celebration, lunch & departure

There is no need to register in advance. If you have any questions, kindly email us at shretreatcenter@gmail.com or call at 973-715-2139.

Monday, March 31

7:00 pm—Holy Hour (Church)

7:30 pm—Bible Study (Hayes Hall)

Tuesday, April 1

9:30 am—Bible Study (Hayes Hall)

12:00 pm—Seniors Meeting (Hayes Hall)

7:45 pm—Light of Christ Prayer Group (Hayes Hall)

Wednesday, April 2**Thursday, April 3**

6:00 pm—Bread & Soup (Hayes Hall)

Friday, April 4

7:00 pm—Stations of the Cross (Hayes Hall)

Saturday, April 5

7:00 am—Pilgrimage Walk from St. Cecilia Church to the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Paterson

8:30 am—Rosary Society Meeting (Hayes Hall)

Sunday, April 6

9:15 am—Liturgy of the Word

NO MORE PRINT EDITION – His Excellency, Bishop Kevin Sweeney has announced that the printed version of the diocesan newspaper, The Beacon, has come to a conclusion. Mounting costs and a change in readership options has contributed to this decision by diocesan leadership. The Bishop is inviting us to read the on-line version of The Beacon at <https://beaconnj.org/>. Information is also at the site for a subscription to the “Beacon and Beyond” Newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - St. Cecilia Soup Kitchen Committee are a group of men and women dedicated to creating nutritious food for the homeless and low income community of Dover, NJ. St. Cecilia's creates a meal once a month in the church basement, then transports that meal to Faith Kitchen. Faith Kitchen is housed in the Trinity Lutheran Church, 123 E. Blackwell Street, in Dover. St Cecilia volunteers will serve the lunch to recipients who are always very grateful and courteous. If you are interested in joining our group, please reach out to Deb Craig @ 973-342-4528.

PALM SUNDAY BAKE SALE – The Saint Monica Guild will conduct a SPRING BAKE SALE on Saturday and Sunday, April 12 and 13 in Hayes Hall. A wide variety of cakes, cookies, candy and other Easter treats will be available for sale. Free coffee will be available on Sunday mornings to all shoppers as you browse.

BEWARE OF SCAMS – Be on the alert of scams which say they are from me. THEY ARE NOT!!! Please call me at the office (973.627.0313x12) if you have **doubt** about a text, email, etc, which is supposedly from me asking for money, gift cards, favors, etc. PLEASE DO NOT BE FOOLED!!!
Fr. Zig

Divine Mercy Academy News

Registration for the 2025-2026 school year at Divine Mercy Academy in Rockaway is now open!

Come see the difference an academically excellent Catholic education makes! Divine Mercy Academy is a Catholic elementary school offering a comprehensive Pre-K through 8th grade faith-based education. We offer a safe, secure & compassionate environment with a high level of individualized attention; certified teachers; weekly liturgies & daily Religion class; academic curriculum with all core subjects; STEM; physical education; music, art, Spanish & library, with technology integrated throughout the curriculum. Aftercare and extracurricular activities available.

Transfer Grants and Scholarships are available to eligible students.

Full day & Half Day Pre-K3 & Pre-K4 programs available. Full Day Kindergarten. We are located at 87 Halsey Avenue in Rockaway. Visit our website at www.dmarockaway.org or call 973-627-6003 for more information.

EVENTS TO ADD TO YOUR CALENDAR – You may want to add the following events to your calendar: “**Jubilee Family Fest**” sponsored by the diocese on Saturday, May 31st from 1:30-4:00 pm at Saint Joseph Shrine in Sterling; **International Celebration of Saint Frances Cabrini and Immigrants: Movie and Food** on Friday, June 13 beginning at 6:00 p.m. AND **Bus Trip to Saint Frances Cabrini Shrine** in the Bronx on Saturday, June 14 leaving at 9:30 a.m. and returning at 3:30 p.m.; **40 Hour Devotions**, Wednesday, June 18 beginning at 7:00 p.m. and ending on Friday, June 20 at 12 Noon. ALL OF THESE WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE BULLETIN WITH DETAILS IN THE COMING WEEKS BUT FOR NOW, MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Please visit the kiosk in the vestibule of the church to see our nice selection of books that are for sale.

\$4.00 each

EASTER EGG HUNT – The annual Easter Egg Hunt for the children of our parish and school will be held on Saturday, April 12th beginning at 11 o'clock in Hayes Hall. Come and join in the fun and faith we will share as we approach the feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord. Lunch will be available at this free of charge event sponsored by the Saint Monica Guild.



Come Learn About Divine Mercy: Join Derek Nelson and Deacon Rick each Monday night, from 3/10-4/21 to learn about this wonderful devotion, it's history, the benefits of praying for Mercy, and how it helps the church & its people. We will meet in Suchon Hall at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Rockaway from 7-8:30 PM. The book we will be referencing, "Understanding Divine Mercy" is \$15.00 and can be purchased at the first session. To reserve your spot text Derek at 201-213-3393 or email Deacon Rick at rvanglahn@gmail.com Pope John Paul II: "There is nothing man needs more than Divine Mercy."

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY – "Luke: The Story of Salvation Fulfilled" is the new series which begins on Monday, March 31st at 7:30 p.m. in Hayes Hall. The course will meet for 8 weeks in a small group setting to view an engaging video presentation followed by a time of lively group discussion and fellowship. There is no cost for attending and watching the video each Monday however, a full color workbook is available for \$33. Another text, "Walking With Christ...", a companion aid is also available for \$18. Online Access for the series is available for \$18. For more information and registration please contact Charles Malaniak at cemalaniak@gmail.com.

BREAKFAST TICKETS – The Knights of Columbus, Council 514, will sponsor a breakfast at Applebee's Restaurant on Route 46 E., Rockaway, on Saturday, April 12th from 8 am to 10 am. Tickets for this fund raiser will be sold after all Masses on March 23 and 30 - \$12 adults and \$10 for children. You may also call 201.486.3882 for tickets and additional information. Your support assists the Knights in their charitable work.

FIRST FRIDAY VISITS—Father Matt and I visit the homebound on the first Friday of every month with the Holy Eucharist and the availability for confession as well. Should you or someone you know like for the priest to visit them on first Friday, please call the parish office and leave your name and phone number so that we may add you to our schedule. - Fr. Zig

**It's Safe, It's Simple & It's Convenient
Give online with WeShare**

Support St. Cecilia Parish today using your debit or credit card or checking or savings account: Visit www.st-cecilia.org and click Donate Online. Select the collection or event of your choice. Set up your donation or payment. That's it! **OR SCAN HERE:**



The Sisters of Christian Charity seek a **PT Communication Specialist** to support their mission through effective storytelling and outreach. This role includes managing digital and print communications, social media, and website content. 15-20 flexible hours a week on site and a mission-driven environment make this an ideal opportunity for a creative communicator with a passion for faith-based work. Contact Sr. Patrice at 973-230-5358. Visit our website for more information: www.sccus.org

CRAFT FAIR

November 8, 2025

Crafters and Vendors Welcome!

Email: saintceciliarsarysociety@gmail.com

Phone: 973-886-8023

JUBILEE WALKING PILGRIMAGE – On Saturday (April 5th) a 23.1 mile walking pilgrimage will take place beginning at our church at 7 a.m. and ending at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Paterson at approximately 6:30 p.m. The first stop will be at Saint Pius X Church in Montville with a second stop at Saint James of the Marches Church in Totowa. Please register on line at the parish website or contact Jim Clancy at the parish office for information.

GET HEALTHY – Coach Janine T, a parishioner for 30 years, is inviting you to contact her regarding a Weight Watchers workshop at the United Methodist Church at Mount Tabor. A QR code may be scanned at the flyer posted on the bulletin board in the church vestibule.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE – Information will be forthcoming regarding this year's Memorial Day Parade in Rockaway Boro on Monday, May 26th. Our parish will have a float in the parade along with a walking contingent of parishioners, old and young. We will demonstrate to the community how proud and thankful we are to celebrate our parish's 150th Anniversary.

PARISH MISSION—"The Way of Trust" - St. Bernard Church, 22 St. Bernard Road in Mt. Hope will be hosting Fr. David W. Gunter, MIC, on April 6th through the 9th. Confessions @ 6:00pm—Rosary @ 6:35 pm—Talk @ 7:00 pm. All are invited!

You are cordially invited to the **Final Diaconate Preaching Practicum** of the semester, which will take place at our church, **Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Rockaway on Saturday, April 26, 2025, at 10:00 AM.** Four diaconate candidates from our diocese, including our own **Elmer Maximo**, will deliver homilies based on the Sunday Scripture readings as part of their spiritual formation. The session will last approximately two hours and will be followed by light refreshments. Everyone is invited to attend and support our future deacons with your presence, prayers, and feedback. To RSVP, please email dcfmevents@gmail.com or call the parish office at (973) 627-0422.



My dear parishioners,

As we assemble to celebrate the Eucharist on this Fourth Sunday of Lent the Gospel tells of the parable of the Prodigal Son. This is one of parables which is found only in the Gospel of Luke and speaks of the mercy God has for sinners. All of us can see ourselves reflected in both the prodigal son as well as the self righteous son who seems unwilling to forgive. I am sure we have been both at one time or another in our life, I know I have! Our focus is on the father, who represents God, and how the son decided for himself to leave his father's presence. The son did not appreciate how blessed he was at home and thought a life of selfishness was more appealing. Little did he know that the sinful life he was entering would bring him such misfortune. But God's love for us is demonstrated in the compassion He shows sinners who repent and return to Him. The Lord forgives in every generation.

In the first lesson for today from the Old Testament Book of Joshua the Lord says, *"Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you."* Even in the Old Testament the Lord always shows Himself as a father who has compassion, not desiring the suffering of His people but rather their happiness. However the Sacred Scriptures witness to the stubbornness and arrogance of humankind to God's invitation to union with Him.

The epistle reading from the Apostle Paul's second Letter to the Corinthians speaks about the importance of reconciliation and how God is the "chief minister" of reconciliation. The Lord sent His Only Begotten Son, the sinless one, to die for our sins so that we might become the very righteousness of God. Reconciliation eliminates sin in our midst and therefore it is imperative that we become *"Ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us."* We all have a very special ministry, namely reconciliation, which has been entrusted to us by God.

The holy season of Lent beckons us to experience repentance for our sins and to approach the sacrament of penance, the celebration of reconciliation. I encourage all of you to come to confession on Wednesday evening, April 16th at 7 o'clock. I have invited 8 priests to be with us for this opportunity to experience God's compassion by the forgiveness of our sins. I remind you of the importance of going to confession prior to the start of the Sacred Triduum, that is Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. Parents serve as wonderful models for their children when coming to confession – so be good examples!

What joy and peace come to us when leaving confession knowing that the sins we committed are no longer attached to us. We experience a "new life" in many respects. Come to confession so that you may experience the GOODNESS OF THE LORD! GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST-GLORY FOREVER!

Father Zig

ST. VINCENT FERRER, Priest
April 5—Patron of Builders

AT VALENCIA in Spain, this illustrious son of St. Dominic came into the world on January 23, 1357. In the year 1374, he entered the Order of St. Dominic in a monastery near his native city. Soon after his profession he was commissioned to deliver lectures on philosophy. On being sent to Barcelona, he continued his scholastic duties and at the same time devoted himself to preaching.

At Lerida, the famous university cit of Catalonia, he received his doctorate. After this he labored six years in Valencia, during which time he perfected himself in the Christian life. In 1390, he was obliged to accompany Cardinal Pedro de Luna to France, but he soon returned home. When, in 1394, de Luna himself had become Pope at Avignon he summoned St. Vincent and made him master of the sacred palace. In this capacity St. Vincent made unsuccessful efforts to put an end to the great schism. He refused all ecclesiastical dignities, even the cardinal's hat, and only craved to be appointed an apostolic missionary. Now began those labors that made him the famous missionary of the 14th century.

He evangelized nearly every province of Spain, and preached in France, Italy, Germany, Flanders, England, Scotland, and Ireland. Numerous conversions followed his preaching, which God Himself assisted by the gift of miracles. Though the Church was then divided by the great schism, the Saint was honorably received in the districts subject to the two claimants to the Papacy. He was even invited to Mohammedan Granada, where he preached the Gospel with much success. He lived to behold the end of the great schism and the election of Pope Martin V. Finally, crowned with labors, he died April 5, 1419 and was canonized in 1455.

PRAYER God, You raised up St. Vincent Your Priest for a ministry of evangelical preaching. Grant that we may see him reigning in heaven who while on earth proclaimed the future judgment. Amen.

Taken from, Lives of the Saints; Catholic Bookings Publishing Company, 1999, New Jersey

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