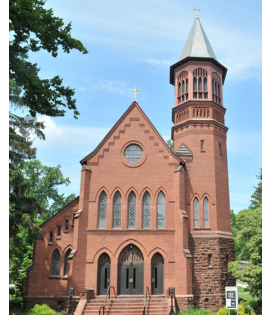




Church of St. Paul  
82 Lake Road West  
Congers, NY 10920

Church of St. Ann  
16 Jefferson Street  
Nyack, NY 10960



Pastor@spasaparish.org  
Parish Office:  
82 Lake Road West, Congers, NY 10920  
Phone: (845) 268-4464/-4465 Fax: -6790  
Current Email: office@spasaparish.org  
Website: spasaparish.org

**Rev. Vladimir Chripko, C.O. Pastor**

Rev. **Roman** Dominik Palecko, C.O. Assistant Pastor

Rev. Narisetty **Arogya** Raju, C.O., Parochial Vicar • Rev. **Joseph** Kumar Narisetty, Parochial Vicar

Rev. Maniraguha **Jean Paul** Ruriho, Assistant

Rev. **George** Torok, C.O., Provost—Weekend Assistant

♦♦ ST. PAUL ♦♦		♦♦ ST. ANN ♦♦
<b>Deacons</b>	<b>Dominic</b> Buonocore <b>Mark</b> Czerwinski, Director RCIA	<b>Luke</b> Conroy, Director RCIA <b>Charles</b> DeGroat <b>Gerald</b> Fenton, Liturgy Coordinator
<b>Parish Office Hours</b>	9:00 am-3:00 pm Monday-Friday	11:00 am-12:00 pm Mon, Tues, Wed & Thurs.
<b>Cemetery/Assistant to Pastor</b>	<b>Lisette</b> Diaz Lisette.sor3@gmail.com	
<b>Religious Education Program</b>	(845-268-5442) Email: Carmen.sor2@gmail.com Carmen Hernandez Lisette Diaz	
<b>St. Paul Regional School</b>	<b>Ms. Michelle Powrie</b> (845-268-6506)	
<b>Music Ministry</b>	<b>James</b> Russell	<b>Vincent</b> Green
<b>Sunday Masses</b>	<b>Saturday</b> 5:00 pm <b>Sunday</b> 7:30 & 10 am, 12:00 & 6:00 pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays of month: Spanish mass at 7:30 pm	<b>Saturday</b> 5:30 pm <b>Sunday</b> 8:45, 10:10 (Family mass, during the school year); 11:30 am
<b>Weekday Masses</b>	Monday—Friday 6:30 & 9:00 am Saturday 7:30 am & 9:00 am	Monday—Friday 7:30 am & 12:10 pm Saturday 9:00 am
<b>Morning Prayer</b>	Monday—Saturday 8:45 am	
<b>Rosary</b>	Following Weekday 9 am Mass	Before 12:10 Mass
<b>Confessions</b>	Saturdays 4:00-4:45 pm Anytime by request.	Saturdays 4:30-5:15 pm Anytime by request.

#### Sacrament of Baptism

To schedule a Baptism at St. Paul or St. Ann please call the rectory at 845-268-4464. Baptism instruction classes are held the last Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the St. Ann School in Nyack. Please call the rectory to register.

#### Sacrament of Marriage

Engaged couples should contact the Rectory at least six months in advance in order to arrange for their participation in the marriage preparation program. Please email assistantpastor@spasaparish.org.

#### Anointing of the Sick

If someone is homebound or in the hospital, please notify the Rectory. Arrangements can be made for the sick person to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Holy Communion is brought to the homebound by our Ministers of Holy Communion.

*January 5, 2020 The Epiphany of the Lord*

<u>ST. PAUL'S CHURCH</u>		<u>ST. ANN'S CHURCH</u>	
<b>Saturday</b>	Jan. 4, 2020	<b>Saturday</b>	Jan. 4, 2020
5:00 PM	Noreen Stack	5:30 PM	Scott Sanguinetti
<b>Sunday</b>	Jan. 5, 2020 The Epiphany	<b>Sunday</b>	Jan. 5, 2020 The Epiphany
7:30 AM	People of the Parish	8:45 AM	Sister Miriam Eugene Fenton — 7th Ann.
10:00 AM	Dorothy Kay — 5th Anniversary	10:10 AM	Angeline Zoccoli (L) — 100th Birthday
12:00 PM	Joseph Devers — 3rd Anniversary	11:30 AM	Pastor's Intention
6:00 PM	Nick Cifuni		Second Collection for Communications, Catholic University of America
<b>Monday</b>	Jan. 6, 2020	<b>Monday</b>	Jan. 6, 2020
6:30 AM	Domenic Procino	7:30 AM	Dolores De Feo-Zavola*
9:00 AM	John & Bridget Nevin	12:10 PM	Lloyd Hamilton, MD
<b>Tuesday</b>	Jan. 7, 2020	<b>Tuesday</b>	Jan. 7, 2020
6:30 AM	Basak and Cangro Families — Living & Deceased Members	7:30 AM	Tom Loveland*
9:00 AM	Souls in Purgatory	12:10 PM	Cesar A. Dario — 1st Anniversary
<b>Wednesday</b>	Jan. 8, 2020	<b>Wednesday</b>	Jan. 8, 2020
6:30 AM	Lucy and Noel Cuniffe	7:30 AM	Anne Marie Ventriglia
9:00 AM	Devassy Pottokaran	12:10 PM	Marjorie Walsh*
<b>Thursday</b>	Jan. 9, 2020	<b>Thursday</b>	Jan. 9, 2020
6:30 AM	Jeff Dellolio	7:30 AM	Joseph Gordon*
9:00 AM	Patrick Tooman	12:10 PM	George Bryant
<b>Friday</b>	Jan. 10, 2020	<b>Friday</b>	Jan. 10, 2020
6:30 AM	Violeta V. Saulon	7:30 AM	Emelia Liska*
9:00 AM	Birdie & Frank Bennett	12:10 PM	Ocampo Family — Thanksgiving
<b>Saturday</b>	Jan. 11, 2020	<b>Saturday</b>	Jan. 11, 2020
7:30 AM	Debra J. Kelder	9:00 AM	Peggy Buckner*
9:00 AM	Mario J. DiSiena	5:30 PM	Georgina Aranzhendi*
5:00 PM	Peter Ereifej		
<b>Sunday</b>	Jan. 12, 2020 The Baptism of the Lord	<b>Sunday</b>	Jan. 12, 2020 The Baptism of the Lord
7:30 AM	Assunta Cecere, William Thomas & William James Sbordone	8:45 AM	Nada Sater (L)
10:00 AM	Thomas McGee	10:10 AM	Rita LaConti*
12:00 PM	Thomas McGee	11:30 AM	Mario Aiello
6:00 PM	Giovanni Dagnelli — Birthday		Second Collection for Heat

Now you can now find out which masses are available for your special intentions and schedule them online. Go to our parish website, SPASAPARISH.ORG. On the homepage, click on the Mass Intentions box for instructions and access to the "Mass Intentions Booking" page. You may also reserve the sanctuary lamp at either church or at St. Ann's Chapel. You can make your offering by credit card. Or you can call the parish office (845-268-4464) to schedule masses the traditional way and make your offering by credit card, cash, or check.

# PARISH NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS



## The Adoration of the Three Kings

Three wise men, or magi, from the East are described in the Gospel of Matthew as having seen a new star and journeyed to pay homage to the Royal Child whose birth was marked by the star's appearance. The wise men were often thought to be kings, and, by the Renaissance, the youngest was frequently depicted as an African, here holding a gold vessel containing myrrh, a precious resin from Arabia and Africa used for perfume. His portrayal reflects both the ethnic diversity encountered by Renaissance painters in a port like Venice, frequented by African traders, and also Christ's promise of salvation for all people. The splendor of the kings contrasts with the simplicity of the Holy Family. Cherubim sing the words inscribed on the scroll, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will," accompanied by others playing flutes and a violin. The New Testament does not give the names of the three kings, but by tradition they have come to be known as Melchior, Balthasar, and Casper. *Painting by Giralomo da Santacroce (1480-1556) Public domain.*

### MY DEAR FRIENDS,

**After a successful Christmas celebration it's time for a message of thanks to the people who made it possible.**

Christmas is one of the happiest, yet also one of the most busy holidays in a parish, when faithful volunteers play a most important part. Christmas here at St. Paul and St. Ann's is the beautiful, reverent, and joyous season it is because of the efforts of many parishioners and the long hours they spend organizing events, decorating our churches, practicing for services, and doing whatever is necessary to ensure that things run smoothly and that everything is in place for the annual celebration of our Lord's Nativity. So thanks are in order.

To all of you who took part in the Christmas programs for our children — the Catholic Daughters and Knights of Columbus Christmas Party, the PREP Children's Mass Christmas Concert and Breakfast with Santa, the St. Paul's Youth Choir Party and Concert at the Palisades Mall, the CYO Breakfast with Santa and Christmas Pageant, all the Advent and Christmas activities that have been taking place in the classrooms throughout December — may the memory of the children's smiles be your reward.

Thanks also, to those of you who helped make Christmas happier for those members of our local community in need: the St. Paul and St. Ann's Food Cupboards volunteers, the food donors, and all who organized or donated gifts for the Giving Trees project. We thank the St. Paul Youth Choir for their food drive at their performance in the Palisades Mall, and all those who brought the Christmas spirit to our homebound parishioners or friends in nursing homes.

Perhaps our churches are never more beautiful than at Christmas time, with decorations that reflect the mystery, reverence, awe and wonder of that Holy Night when Christ was born. Thank you to all who worked behind the scenes, cleaning the church, setting up the Christmas trees and lights, the floral arrangements and wreaths, and the nativity creches, both indoors and out. We are so grateful for the Trees of Remembrance,

*(Continues on p. 5)*

*thank you!*



# FROM the RECTORY

## MASS BOOK & MEMORIALS

You may schedule a mass for your special intention on our website, SPASAPARISH.org. Mass availability is shown for the next 180 days. Or you may call the rectory to book a mass.

You may also request that the 'Sanctuary Lamp' in either church or the St. Ann's Chapel be lit for your special intention or in memory of a loved one. The candle burns for 1 week. Donation is \$27.

If you'd like to bring up the Gifts at a mass for which you've scheduled an announced intention, please tell the usher.

## EMAIL FOR THE PASTOR

Pastor@spasaparish.org

## BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deadline is Friday, the week before publication

Send to: Bulletin@spasaparish.org

**Jan. 12 bulletin — deadline, Tuesday, Jan. 7**

**Jan. 19 bulletin — deadline, Tuesday, Jan. 14**

## PARISH WEBSITE

For more detailed information about our parish:

**Spasaparish.org**

## MEMORIAL INTENTIONS — WEEK OF JAN. 5

**Sanctuary Lamp (St. Paul)**

**Joseph Devers — 3rd Anniversary**

**Sanctuary Lamp (St. Ann)**

**Chapel (St. Ann)**



## St. Paul & St. Ann PRAYER FOR THE SICK

*We pray that the sick of our parish, our relatives, and friends will experience God's healing love, especially:*

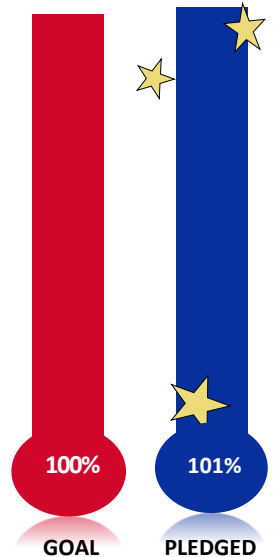
Raymond Devlin, Julia Martin,  
Edward Kwiecinski, Laura Mazzacone,  
Sr. Margaret Patricia McDermott, Kathryn Scarmato,  
Emilia Raphael-Olivier, Carolyn Pagliuca,  
Michael Doria, Noah Diaz, Manuel Tucay

Please call the rectory (268-4464) to be placed on the list of those who need prayers in time of illness, or call with the names of any sick family members or friends. The name will remain on the list for 3 weeks and then be removed unless we hear from you that the person still needs our prayers.

**FORMED** Free Catholic movies, e-books, audios, and programs. Go to *Formed.org* and use our parish code **X74FWM**. You can download a free **Formed app**.



\$1,241,500 **\$1,258,375**



**RENEW + REBUILD**

348 families have pledged as of  
Dec. 24, 2019

\$323,403



## 300 CLUB WINNERS

Congratulations to the **BIG WINNERS**  
of our NOVEMBER Drawing!

#24	Virginia Ryan	\$50
#64	Margaret Russell	\$100
#269	Michael Brunken	\$350
#289	Mr. & Mrs. Martini	\$1,000

## NOVEMBER 2019 COLLECTIONS

	11/01/19	11/03/19	11/10/19	11/17/19	11/24/19
St. Paul and St. Ann	2,978	12,851	12,015	12,406	12,544
SP and SA					
Parish Giving & We share	4,107 + 6,733				



# CHURCH of ST. ANN



## St. Ann's LITURGY MINISTERS for Jan. 12, 2020



TIME	LECTORS	EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS	ALTAR SERVERS	USHERS
5:30 PM	M. Lorenzini	J. Crisafi, J. Gunther	TBA	Joe A., Frank B., George B., Ric A., Logan
8:45 AM	E. Dailey	G. Moreau, G. Nelson	TBA	James C., Bill D. Jules C.
11:30 AM	B. Leone	D. Durandisse, J. Dangler	TBA	Ed T., Ed. G., Rob C., Peter K., J. Vital

<b>DEVOTIONS</b>	Rosary Divine Mercy Chaplet Rosary & Divine Mercy	Monday through Friday Monday through Friday Saturday	11:45 am (11:15 am, First Friday) after 12:10 pm Mass after 9 am Mass
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**First Friday** 7:30 am Mass; 8:00 am to 11:50 am Exposition of Blessed Sacrament (chapel); 8:15 Morning Prayer, 11:15 Rosary; 11:50 Benediction; 12:10 Mass; 12:40 pm Divine Mercy Chaplet; 7:30 pm Holy Hour with Exposition & Benediction.



### BLOOD DRIVE SAVE THE DATE: **JAN. 19**

In this season of giving, I hope you will give the most precious gift of all, The Gift of Life. Thanks to generous donors like you, hundreds of people are helped by blood drives like the one we do at St. Paul & St. Ann's.

Our drive will be on Jan. 19 instead of in the spring due to location

availability. It will be held in the **St. Ann's cafeteria from 8 am to 2 pm**. There will be a gift for all participants.

Please ask your friends and Facebook contacts to join you. To sign up, email [benison65@yahoo.com](mailto:benison65@yahoo.com) or call me at 845-353-2424 or go to [nybc.org](http://nybc.org). Don't forget to request a preferred time. Hope to see you there. **George Berry**

(continued from p. 3)

the donations of poinsettias, and the generous gift of parishioner Keith Taylor, of Hannemann's Funeral Home in Nyack, who each year provides the trees, wreaths, and pine roping at St. Ann's.

And finally we come Christmas itself, celebrated in our parish with 13 Vigil and Christmas Day masses! This requires a great number of lay ministers — lectors, eucharistic ministers, servers, ushers, as well as our choirs and cantors. There is also caroling led by the St. Paul's Youth Choir and two pre-mass concerts at Christmas Eve at St. Ann's. We are so grateful for assistance of all who help us worship in the great Christmas liturgy.

And last but not least, are the members of the parish staff and those who assist them, all of whom have been quietly juggling holiday matters on top of their regular responsibilities since before Advent began. They especially deserve thanks from all of us.

Nothing brings us together as a parish like Christmas. "O come let us adore Him," says the hymn. And so we are drawn to the Lord of Love and lay before Him our talents, our efforts, and our time to make each Christmas the very best ever. He brings out our goodness.

Thank you for everything. May you be blessed a hundredfold!

*Fr. Vladimír*

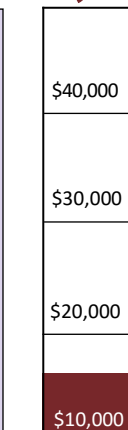
### ST. ANN'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY INFORMATION

**WE HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS** for any questions, ideas, thoughts or just to share a happy memory of the Church of St. Ann as we celebrate our Jubilee Year: [SA150anniversary@gmail.com](mailto:SA150anniversary@gmail.com)

**WEBSITE — [STANNS150thANNIVERSARY.COM](http://STANNS150thANNIVERSARY.COM)**



**\$50,000**



**\$16,120 raised**

**1869-  
2019**

### IN HONOR OF ST. ANN'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY



**LET'S MAKE THIS STATUE  
OUR LEGACY TO THE  
FUTURE GENERATIONS  
WHO WILL WORSHIP  
AT ST. ANN'S**

This statue, called "Generations" shows Sts. Ann and Joachim watching protectively over the Holy Family — their daughter, Mary, son-in-law, Joseph, and their newborn grandson, Jesus. The plan is to bring this beautiful work of art to our parish, installing it in a small plaza to be created outside the church on Jefferson St. where passersby can contemplate the Holy Family — and the holiness of all families. **The cost will be \$50,000.** If you would like to help make this statue a reality, please send your donation (any size) to St. Paul and St. Ann's Parish, 16 Jefferson St. (St. Ann and St. Joachim Way) Nyack, NY 10960. Please note on your check or designate that your donation is for the "STATUE." **Anyone who donates \$1,000 or more will receive a desktop-sized replica of "Generations."** So far, generous parishioners have raised **\$16,120**. We will keep you up to date on our project's progress each week. Thank you and God Bless!

# CHURCH of ST. PAUL



## St. Paul's LITURGY MINISTERS for Jan. 12, 2020



TIME	LECTORS	EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS	ALTAR SERVERS	USHERS
5:00 PM	F. Gemeinhardt	A. Matthew, T. Ryan	TBA	V. Panzo, W. Rodriguez, G. Holland
7:30 AM	R. Festa	B. Ruggiere, D. Costanzo	TBA	A. Smith, T. Totor, M. McKenna
10:00 AM	L. Perez	M. & J. Leighton	TBA	G. Spinney, H. Caceres, M. Katigbak W. Kelder, S. Reynolds, J. Granata, S. Leto, V. Alfieri, A. Diaz,
12:00 PM	A. Cacciola	R. Roy, G. Buonocore	TBA	W. Hartl, P. Dudgeon, A. Dibianco, M. Reilly, F. Cifuni, H. O'Boyle, K. Clifford, M. Graziano
6:00 PM	M. Lebron	M. & M. Toter	TBA	C. Linen, J. Cerreta, R. Aberion
<b>EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS</b> <b>Homebound</b> — K. Hartl, E. Indyk, L. Diaz <b>Nyack Manor</b> — E. & A. Hage <b>Tolstoy</b> — K. Reedy				
<b>DEVOTIONS</b> Morning Prayer Holy Rosary Eucharistic Adoration Our Lady of Fatima Novena Chaplet of Divine Mercy		Daily Daily Wednesday Wednesday Friday	8:45 am after 9:00 am Mass noon to 6:00 pm, Benediction at 6:00 pm 6:00 pm after 9:00 am Mass	<b>Every second Sunday at noon mass is interpreted into ASL (American Sign Language) for deaf and hard of hearing parishioners.</b>

**We would like to take this opportunity to thank so many people for their help with the Parish Religious Education Program during this Christmas season.**

Our Christmas Concert went extremely well and it was great seeing all of our children singing together and parents standing proudly taking photos.

A special thanks to Ed Tarife and the Youth Choir for sharing their musical talent. Hopefully your children will be inspired to join the choir.

Breakfast with Santa was a wonderful event and we feel blessed to have been able to share the joy of the Christmas Season with our PREP children and families. Thank you, parents, for bringing your children and supporting our first Concert & Breakfast. A special thanks to St. Nicholas, Deacon Luke, and our Santa Claus, Tom Sullivan. We couldn't have done it without them!

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude for all our volunteers who helped out during the Breakfast. It was a big success and a great event for our children because of you.

To those families who made a donation for the two families we adopted this Christmas, thank you. Because of your generosity and kindness these children will wake up and find Christmas gifts under the tree and have a wonderful Christmas.

A special "thank you" to all our catechists, assistant catechists, helpers, and volunteers for all you do. You are an inspiration and example to our children. Your selflessness, time, patience, and kindness is priceless. Sharing the love of Jesus and spreading the Good News to our children bring us so much joy and happiness.

Thank you to Ed Gannon, Marty Katigbak, and James Bellon for your assistance with our children at the 10:10 Children's Mass. Your guidance has been greatly appreciated.

The PREP team wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Carmen Hernandez, Lissette Diaz, Cookie Garces, Ellen Buckley & Yaneth Magana**



Fr. Vladimir with the PREP team and some of the volunteers behind the Breakfast with Santa on Dec. 15: (L to R. back row: Joe Diaz, Ellen Buckley, Deacon Luke Conroy, and Ricardo Mateo (front row) Becky Mateo, Lissette Diaz, Carmen Hernandez, Tom Sullivan, and Carlos Hernandez.

## MORE PARISH & COMMUNITY EVENTS

# MARCH FOR LIFE

January 24<sup>th</sup> 2020



MARCH FOR LIFE  
#WhyWeMarch | MarchForLife.org

**The Mission We Embrace**

We promote the dignity of every human life by working to end abortion — uniting, educating, and mobilizing in the public square.

For more information or to make a reservation, please call:

**845-548-3146**  
**845-492-6709**  
**845-634-6885**  
**845-425-1322** (multi-lingual)

### ROCKLAND RIGHT TO LIFE BUS TRIP TO THE MARCH FOR LIFE

Bus leaves at 6 am from Saint Francis of Assisi Church, Parrott Rd., West Nyack.

Trip includes Rally for Life in the National Mall, The March for Life to the U.S. Supreme Court Bldg., and a visit to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The bus will leave from the Shrine about 6 pm and arrive back in West Nyack at 11 pm.

**Cost \$25**

Since the cost of the bus far exceeds the price of a ticket, contributions to subsidize the trip are most welcome. Please send to:

**ROCKLAND RTL COMMITTEE**

**PO BOX 9348**

**BARDONIA, NY 10954**

**(We regret the donations are not tax deductible.)**



**St. Paul's Food Cupboard** again thanks all our parishioners who donated so generously to our Christmas distribution on Dec. 21. The hams, turkeys, breads, canned goods, and sweet treats were packed and given out to our Rockland County neighbors. On their behalf, we offer thanks and appreciation for your continued support.

We also want to thank all of our volunteers who worked tirelessly this season to collect, sort, pack, and distribute the many, many food bags. It is their help throughout the year and especially during holiday time that allows the Food Cupboard to continue our mission.

### ONLINE TRAINING & CERTIFICATION FOR LECTORS!

Have you thought about becoming more active in your parish? Are you a lector who wants to learn more about the Scriptures? Give back this holiday season and sign-up for a new online training program, offered in English and Spanish! Through an instructional video and short quizzes, deepen your connection to this ministry and earn your certification in as little as two hours. Sign up at [nyliturgy.teachable.com](http://nyliturgy.teachable.com)

### ALBERTUS MAGNUS TAKE-A-TOUR THURSDAYS

This program provides an opportunity to see what sets Albertus Magnus apart from all other high schools and how the AM values-based curriculum benefits our students academically, spiritually, and co-curricularly. Jan. 9, 16, and 23. Starts at 8:30 am in the library with a 15 minute presentation, followed by a half hour tour of the school. Please register at [albertusmagnus.net/admissions/visit-our-campus](http://albertusmagnus.net/admissions/visit-our-campus). 78 Rt. 304, Bardonia, NY, 10954.

Anyone who needs to report an alleged incident of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest, deacon, religious, or lay person serving in the Archdiocese of New York is asked to contact Eileen Mulcahy, (646-794-2949) or by emailing Ms. Mulcahy at [victimassistance@archny.org](mailto:victimassistance@archny.org). Information can also be found on the Archdiocesan website [www.archny.org](http://www.archny.org). In keeping with the Archdiocesan policy regarding sexual abuse of minors, this information is provided to ensure that our children remain safe and secure.

## ORATORIAN FATHERS PILGRIMAGE WITH FATHER RAVI

on a 14-day

Catholic Pilgrimage Tour to

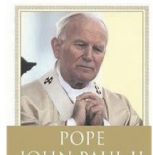
Budapest, Vienna, Mariazell, Melk, Prague, Krakow, Lagiewniki, Wadowice, Czestochowa, Warsaw, Dubrovnik, Medjugorje & more.

**DAILY MASS AT THE HOLY SITES**



**MAY 17 - 30, 2020**  
**\$4250.00**

**All-inclusive from**  
**Newark, NJ**



Visiting the Shrine of  
Medjugorje, Bosnia

A SPECIAL HEALING MASS

This year is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of Pope John Paul II and will visit  
his home and celebrate the mass

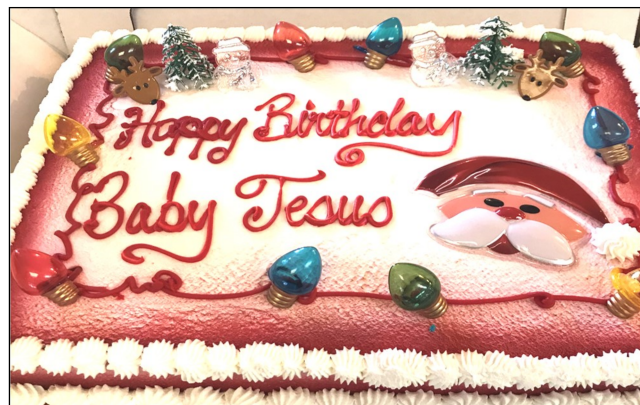
#### **For more information:**

Please call Martina Collins at  
914-320-8412 or e-mail at  
[iackben.1412@aol.com](mailto:iackben.1412@aol.com)





2019 Part 1: How we celebrated Christmas at St. Paul & St. Ann's



(Above and left) On Dec. 14, the Catholic Daughters and the Knights of Columbus collaborated on a Children's Christmas Luncheon at St. Ann's cafeteria. Families enjoyed lunch, kids made ornaments, and Santa gave out gifts from his workshop. Elves led the group in a song of praise to the Baby Jesus!

Photos courtesy of Cathy Sherry



(Below; far right on next page) On Dec. 15, Gaudete Sunday — the Third Sunday of Advent, the Parish Religious Education Program presented a Christmas Concert by the St. Paul's Youth Choir and all the students in the PREP program.



(Below) O Holy Night! The St. Paul's creche brings the story of the Nativity to all passersby as it stands, illuminated at night, in front of the church along Lake Road in Congers.

Photo by Nancy Conroy





## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem!  
Your light has come,  
the glory of the Lord shines upon you!  
See, darkness covers the earth,  
and thick clouds cover the peoples;  
but upon you the Lord shines.

— Isaiah 60:1-2

Many people complain about how dark it is at this time of the year. But imagine living in the little town of Barrow, Alaska. It's located on the farthest northern tip of the state, above the Arctic Circle. At this time of the year, the earth is tilted in such away that the sun never shows itself for over two months in Barrow. But when the sun does rise for a moment on Jan. 24, the whole town comes out to celebrate because, finally, there is light again!

The people there must have a special appreciation of the words we hear today in the First Reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Of course, Isaiah was writing about a different kind of light and darkness than what we experience around the time of the winter solstice. The thick clouds that cover the peoples are those of spiritual darkness, the evil and sin that prevailed in his time and which still make the world today seem like a very dark place indeed.

But the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is like the rising of the sun on a very dark place. When the sun rises, the darkness is dispelled. When Jesus shines His forgiveness and grace into our lives, the darkness in our souls disappears. And we know that the Light will triumph.

We celebrate today the Feast of the Epiphany when the Magi — also searching after a light, the Star of Bethlehem — found the Christ Child. And through them, His glory was revealed for all peoples to see.

The earliest known Christmas carol may be a hymn composed by St. Hilary of Poitiers in the fourth century. Its Latin title is "Jesu Refulsit Omnium," which roughly translates "Jesus, the Light of All the World." It begins:

*Jesus, devoted redeemer of all nations, has shone forth,  
Let the whole family of the faithful celebrate the stories.*

*The shining star, gleaming in the heavens, makes Him known at His birth  
and, going before, has led the Magi to His cradle . . .*

Yes, we find Him at the cradle today too, and let us, the whole family of the faithful, celebrate.

Photos by Nancy Conroy



(Below) At the Christmas Concert, each class stood up, turned around to face the audience, and sang a Christmas carol. It was great to see so many families there! (Left) St. Nicholas enters St. Ann's for the Children's Mass before the Concert.

More next week!

