

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF
St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help



Church of St. Matthew
 616 Warburton Avenue
 Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706
 Rectory.....914-478-2822



Our Lady of Perpetual Help
 535 Ashford Avenue
 Ardsley, NY 10502
 www.stmolph.com

January 4, 2026 • The Epiphany of the Lord

Clergy

Rev. Douglas Crawford.....*Pastor*
 Rev. Nicholas Nwagwu.....*Chaplain, St. John Riverside Hospital*
 Rev. George Lodi.....*Retired In Residence*

Sacrament of Baptism

The date for baptism should be scheduled in advance. Please contact the Rectory.

Sacrament of Matrimony

Arranged 6 months in advance. Please contact the rectory and speak with a Priest before any deposit is made for the wedding reception.

Anointing & Last Rites

Call the rectory at any time.

Religious Education Program

Mrs. Stephanie Bonney.....*Coordinator*
 Mr. Jay A. Conklin.....*Assistant*
 Office Location: St. Matthew Church
 Phone: 914-693-0030 • e-mail: ReligiousEd@stmolph.com

Parish Emails

Fr. Crawford.....fr.dycrawford@yahoo.com
 Rectory Office.....office@stmolph.com

Mass Schedule

Daily Mass: Monday - Saturday

St. Matthew.....9:00 am
 OLPH.....8:00 am

Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday

St. Matthew 5:30 pm
 OLPH4:00 pm

Sunday

St. Matthew.....8:30 am & 11:30 am
 OLPH.....10:00 am

Holy Day Mass

Check the Parish Bulletin for schedule.

Sacrament of Penance: Saturday

OLPH3:00 - 3:45 pm
 St. Matthew.....4:30 - 5:15 pm

Prayers & Novena

Miraculous Medal Novena

(St. Matthew) Monday after the 9:00 am Mass

Rosary (OLPH): First Saturday of the month immediately following the Mass

Holy Hour & Exposition

(St. Matthew) Friday between 9:30 am - 10:30 am

Mass Intentions



Our prayers during Mass are spiritually important and bring benefit and

comfort to those who have experienced a loss or acute need. If you would like to arrange for a Mass to be said for the repose of the soul of a loved one or for a special intention, please visit or call the parish office 914-478-2822 or you can schedule a time using the online website. You can also request to memorialize the tabernacle candles on the altars. The direct links can be found on the parish website: www.stmolph.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3

(A) 4:00 pm Intentions of Spadaccini Family

(H) 5:30 pm Alan Burns †

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4

(H) 8:30 am John Cannon †

(A) 10:00 am Olga Pecora †

(H) 11:30 am Salvatore Macri †

MONDAY, JANUARY 5

(A) 8:00 am October 2025 Confirmation Class

(H) 9:00 am Missa Pro Popolo

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6

(A) 8:00 am Intentions of Oliver Jackson Higgins, Mario Jack Ferguson & Parents

(H) 9:00 am In Thanksgiving to Holy Trinity

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7

(A) 8:00 am Trentacoste & Spagnuolo Families

(H) 9:00 am Carol Scheerer †

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8

(H) 8:00 am Souls in Purgatory

(A) 9:00 am Michael Wardlaw †

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9

(A) 8:00 am Intentions of Linda Spagnuolo

(H) 9:00 am In Thanksgiving to St. Antonio

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10

(A) 8:00 am Intentions of Janet Lokay

(H) 9:00 am Intentions of Davor Vucetic

(A) 4:00 pm Carol Kennedy †

(H) 5:30 pm Decd. Members of William B. Walzer Sr. Family

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

(H) 8:30 am John & Jean Cannon †

(A) 10:00 am Olga Pecora †

(H) 11:30 am Mirko & Gospuva Salinovic †

REQUESTED BY:

Agnes & Hugh Dynes

Lumalcuri Family

Bryan Healy

Family

Joe & Toni Newbury

Janet & Linda

Linda Spagnuolo

Linda Spagnuolo

George Febles & Family

Family

Carol

Nancy Maleska

Family

(H) - Hastings: St. Matthew

(A) - Ardsley: Our Lady of Perpetual Help

“A religion that doesn’t interfere with secular order will soon discover that the secular order will not refrain from interfering with it.”
- Abp. Fulton J. Sheen

The Epiphany of the Lord



Our monthly food collection continues at St. Matthew Church. Parishioners are invited to bring non-perishable food donations for the Hastings Food Pantry to Mass on the second weekend of each month, which will be the weekend of January 10th & 11th

Please no glass, open or expired items and please do not leave food donations at other times.

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the good news room™

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January 4, 2026 - The Epiphany of the Lord

Reading I: Isaiah 50: 1-6

The prophet offers a vision of Zion as a city that radiates with divine glory. It draws the nations together to worship the one true God. It is honored by foreigners.

Reading II: Ephesians 3: 2-3a, 5-6

St. Paul is a steward of divine mysteries. God's grace has come to him on its way to others, namely the "Gentiles," as well as "the sons of Israel."

The Gospel: Matthew 2: 1-12

As the new Davidic king, Jesus is born in David's hometown. The Magi, who were most likely astrologers from Persia, become the first Gentiles (non-Jews) to recognize the Kingship of Jesus. In a real way, in that regard, they were our ancestors.

COLLECTION REPORT:

Weekend: December 21:

Sunday 12/21: \$4,201
Parish Giving \$2,570
Weekend Total: \$6,771

Upcoming Second Collections



**Christmas Flower & Christmas Envelopes can be put into any collection basket at any time.*

January 11: Comm. & Cath U.
January 18: Maintenance & Repair

Online Giving

St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help offers two ways to make church contributions online:
Zelle and Parish Giving



Parish Giving

For Parish Giving use the QR Code or visit the website:
www.paritygiving.org
and search for **St. Matthew & OLPH Church**



zelle

Scan the QR Code in your banking app to find: **The St. Matthew** or find us using our email address office@stmolph.com

Please Note: The church's legal name is so long that our bank only uses the first several characters, hence why in Zelle our name shows up as: **The St. Matthew**

CANDLE DEDICATIONS



OLPH Tabernacle Candle

In Memory of Fred Wolff Sr.

req. by Family

St. Matthew Tabernacle Candle

In Memory of

req. by

St. Matthew Blessed Mother Candle

In Memory of

req. by

Candle dedications can be reserved online or by calling the rectory. Please visit our website at www.stmolph.com

Grand Prize: \$6,500
Christine & Rose Utchel

2nd Prize: \$1,000
Paulette Landry

3rd Prize: \$500
OLPH 6th Boys

4th Prize: \$500
Christine Schechinger

5th Prize: \$500
STM 5:30pm Ushers

6th Prize: \$200
Ed Scaperotta

7th Prize: \$200
Judy Macancela

8th Prize: \$200
Frank Ciancio

9th Prize: \$200
Stephanie & Michael Donoghue

10th Prize: \$200
Tom & Marie Milton



Brian Dunne-USN
Christopher Gaulin-USA
George Moore-USN
Michael Germain-USN
Peter Dillon-USCG
Chris Minozzi-USMC
Sean Roth-USA
Mike Gibbons-USMC
Nick Lumalcuri - USN
Claire Sherry - USAF



Christmas Memorial Flowers

CHRISTMAS FLOWER ENVELOPES & CHRISTMAS OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you would like to make a donation towards the Christmas Flowers in memory of a loved one, please use the Christmas Flower Envelope that you can find in your monthly envelope packet.

There are also extra Christmas Flower Envelopes & Christmas Envelopes on the tables in the rear of the churches.

Christmas Flower Envelopes & Christmas Envelopes can be dropped into any collection basket on any weekend.



Ministry to Homebound Parishioners

For those parishioners who are homebound or elderly, please reach out to the Rectory if you are interested in having a priest visit to hear your confession, receive the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and receive Holy Communion.

Please call 914-478-2822.

every contribution is hugely valued



Support Our Parish

We rely on the generosity of parishioners and visitors in order for our Parish to thrive. We would not be able to fulfill our mission without your

financial support.

Also, please remember St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help in your Will or Living Trust. Kindly contact the rectory office with your inquiries.



St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish is eager to recruit new Lectors and Ushers for both churches.

If you feel you have a calling for either of these two important ministries within the parish, please contact Fr. Crawford



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES will resume on **Wednesday, January 7th** and **Sunday, January 11th.**

WEDNESDAY PROGRAM at OLPH SCHOOL Grades 1-4 meet from **4:00pm to 5:00pm**

Grades 5 & 6 meet from 6:30pm to 7:30pm

SUNDAY PROGRAM at ST. MATTHEW SCHOOL: Grades 1-6 meet from 9:45am - 10:45am



Please keep in your prayers the ill of our parish especially: **Charles Green**

And for those who have died marked by the sign of faith, especially:

If you would like to add the name of a loved one to the prayer list, please contact the rectory: 914-478-2822



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ATTENDANCE ENVELOPES:

All students must drop in the collection basket their **ATTENDANCE ENVELOPE** for the corresponding week. If you are not able to attend Mass at STM or OLPH, please get a bulletin, signed by the Priest, from the church where you attended Mass. Staple your attendance envelope to the bulletin and give it to your teacher the next week. Mass attendance will be kept tract of during the year.



In the event of a weather cancellation, we will do our best to notify all through Flocknote. If you have not yet signed up for Flocknote, please visit: www.flocknote.com/stmolph

Also note: From December 26th through the end of January, if the weather is bad (snow, ice) for driving, the 8am Mass at OLPH will be automatically cancelled for the safety of all.

Faith Betrayed: The Vatican's Silence on China and the Fate of Jimmy Lai

by Anne Hendersbott

Jimmy Lai's conviction underscores the Vatican's failure to exercise meaningful leadership in defending justice—serving as a stark reminder of the Catholic Church's compromised role.

Jimmy Lai, the Catholic Hong Kong media tycoon and outspoken critic of Beijing, has just been convicted in what many observers are calling a “show trial” under China’s sweeping National Security Law. The trial of the 78-year-old Lai, which was conducted without a jury and overseen by three government-appointed judges, ended with guilty verdicts on charges of collusion with foreign forces and sedition—offenses that could keep him imprisoned for the rest of his life.



In their written judgment, the court concluded Lai was the “mastermind of the conspiracies” alleged by prosecutors and ruled that his “only intent was to seek the downfall of the Chinese Communist Party.” Sentencing has not yet been scheduled.

Rights groups, Western governments, and press freedom advocates have condemned the proceedings as politically motivated, pointing to Lai’s five years in custody, much of it in solitary confinement, and the lack of credible evidence presented against him. Lai’s son, Sebastien, told reporters that the family was “not surprised” at the ruling: “This is a perfect example of how the national security law has been molded and weaponized against someone who essentially said stuff that they didn’t like.” Lai’s daughter, Claire, added that “this verdict proves that the authorities still fear our father, even in his weakened state, for what he represents.” She continued, “We stand by his innocence and condemn this miscarriage of justice.”

The conviction marks not only a personal tragedy for Lai, who built the pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily into a symbol of resistance, but also a broader warning about the collapse of judicial independence and free expression in Hong Kong since Beijing imposed the National Security Law in 2020.

The conviction also underscores the Vatican’s failure to exercise meaningful leadership in defending justice—serving as a stark reminder of the Catholic Church’s compromised role, with the Vatican retreating instead of defending Jimmy Lai, despite his status as a devout Catholic and symbol of resistance to authoritarianism. Bill McGurn of The Wall Street Journal has consistently defended Jimmy Lai, portraying him as a symbol of courage and press freedom in Hong Kong. He has described Lai’s arrest as a “badge of honor” and condemned Beijing’s use of the National Security Law as a tool to silence dissent.

McGurn has emphasized that Lai’s case is deeply personal to him—he served as Lai’s godfather when he converted to Catholicism several years ago and has long considered him a close friend. He noted that Lai’s family is “very entwined” with his own, making the injustice of the arrest even more poignant. McGurn has been very critical of the late Pope Francis’ Vatican response to the Lai injustice—calling it a “disaster.”

In a speech to a gathering of Catholic leaders at the Napa Institute in California, just weeks before his arrest and incarceration, Lai questioned why the Vatican would agree to a “secret agreement” with the Communist Party. Jimmy Lai asked the Napa gathering: “Is there some corruption in the Vatican to cause them to sign such an agreement?”

Bill Donohue of the Catholic League reported that: *Benjamin Rogers, co-founder of Hong Kong Watch, accused Pope Francis of turning a blind eye to what is going on in China. He maintains that the leader of China, Xi Jinping, “wants the Catholic Church to kowtow to the Marxist-Leninist Chinese Communist Party regime.”*

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Still, faithful Catholics were encouraged when Pope Leo XIV met with Jimmy Lai's wife, Teresa, and daughter, Claire, in October 2025. But it may simply be too little too late to save Jimmy Lai from his fate in the repressive Communist government. The current pontiff has kept the same Vatican-China "deal" on the appointment of bishops that are acceptable to the Communist Party.

In September, Catholic News Agency reported that Pope Leo XIV suppressed two historic dioceses, Xiwanzi and Xuanhua—both erected in 1946 by Pope Pius XII, and replaced them with the Diocese of Zhangjiakou. The See of the new diocese is based in the city of Zhangjiakou, where China's state-controlled Catholic association set up its own diocese in 1980 using boundaries never recognized by the Holy See. According to Catholic News Agency, Pope Leo XIV appointed a new bishop to lead the new diocese "within the framework of the Holy See's provisional agreement with the Chinese government on the appointment of bishops."

Missing from the Vatican announcement was any mention of Bishop Augustine Cui Tai, 75, the longtime underground bishop of Xuanhua, the diocese Pope Leo XIV suppressed. Bishop Cui Tai has been subjected to repeated detention, house arrest, and forced labor over the past three decades, according to news reports.

On March 26, 2024, Franciscan University of Steubenville's Veritas Center for Ethics in Public Life hosted a presentation on the plight of Jimmy Lai. The purpose of the campus event was to highlight Lai's fight for human rights, press freedom, and democracy in Hong Kong, and to raise awareness among students about the injustice of his ongoing imprisonment. At the event, Franciscan students viewed the documentary *The Hong Konger: Jimmy Lai's Extraordinary Struggle for Freedom*, produced by the Acton Institute. Mark Simon—Jimmy Lai's business associate for 23 years and former senior executive at Next Digital and current managing director of the Lai Trust—spoke at the event. Joseph Cella, formerly the U.S. ambassador to Fiji, also told students about the case and the response from the United States.

While we cannot know what may be happening behind the scenes at the Vatican—or what negotiations may be occurring—the lack of a public response from the Vatican on this issue continues to concern all faithful Catholics. By sustaining its controversial and secretive agreement with Beijing on the suppression and appointment of bishops, the Vatican appears to have forfeited an opportunity to stand unequivocally with one of its most faithful sons against tyranny.

Lai's courage in the face of repression contrasts sharply with the Church's silence, exposing a moral lapse that will echo far beyond Hong Kong. The Vatican may have its own reasons for this silence, but by appearing to elevate political expediency above prophetic conviction, it imperils both Jimmy Lai's cause and its own standing as a voice for truth and justice in a world that desperately needs both.

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Anne Hendershott is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Veritas Center for Ethics in Public Life at Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH. She is the author of *The Politics of Envy* (Crisis Publications, 2020).



Did You Know Lebanon is in the Bible More Than 70 Times?

by Camille Dalmás

From November 30 to December 2, Leo XIV visited Lebanon on his first international trip. The "Land of the Cedars" occupies an important place in the Holy Scriptures.

Though it's only in the Old Testament, Lebanon is referred to 71 times in Scripture. The mountain range that occupies a large part of its territory is described by the prophets as one of the natural borders of the Promised Land offered by God to the people of Israel.



"Every place on which you set foot shall be yours; your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the Western Sea" (Deuteronomy 11:24), Moses declared after the exodus from Egypt. Moses' successor, Joshua, even included "Baal-Gad, in the valley of Lebanon" in this territory. While the exact location of this city, the northernmost point of the Jewish nation's lands, is unknown, several hypotheses point to the southern Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.

The Land of the Cedars

In the Bible, Lebanon is also very often associated with the magnificent cedar forests that grow on the slopes of its mountains. Mentioned 75 times, this tree, which today appears on the Lebanese flag, was a key economic resource for the Near East at the time. Indeed, it was used by Solomon to build the Temple of Jerusalem, the most sacred site in ancient Judaism, as well as the palace of the wise ruler. To carry out these constructions, Solomon sent tens of thousands of Jews to the Lebanese king Hiram of Tyre to transport the precious trunks.

The reputation for beauty of Lebanon's cedar forests is reflected in some of the most poetic verses in the Bible. This is the case in Psalm 92, where it is said that the righteous "grow like a cedar in Lebanon" and prosper despite their age, like these trees "green and full of sap" (Ps 92:12-15). In Psalm 104, the Lebanese forests become an image of the perfection of divine creation: "The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests..." (Ps 104:16-17).

Imagery of love and beauty

In the Song of Solomon, the riches of Lebanon resonate in the song of the husband's love for his beloved. Expressing all his sensuality and desire, the man marvels at the beauty of his wife, associating her mouth with milk and honey and saying that "the scent of [her] garments is like the scent of Lebanon" (Song of Solomon 4:11).

The beloved compares his bride to a locked garden, a sealed fountain, "a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon" (Song of Solomon 4:15). And she, in turn, contemplates the object of her love, lingering over his legs, "alabaster columns, set on bases of gold," whose appearance "is like Lebanon: choice as the cedars" (Song of Solomon 5:15). The beauty of the Lebanese land also inspires the prophets Ben Sira, Hosea, and Nahum, who extol its fragrance, the renown of its wine, and the delicacy of its flora.

A mirror of divine power

The prophet Isaiah, for his part, sees in the verdant Lebanon a testimony to natural strength that only God can dominate. "Look, the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the tallest trees will be cut down, and the lofty will be brought low. He will hack down the thickets of the forest with an ax, and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall" (Is 10:33-34).

Similarly, "The Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon" (Ps 29:5), and his power makes them sway like "abundance of grain" (Ps 72:16). The prophet Jeremiah, for his part, asserts that God would be capable of turning the white peaks of Lebanon into a barren desert (Jer 22:6).

Several passages associate Lebanon with its wildlife, with Isaiah reporting the presence of lions and leopards in its mountains. On the Lebanese peaks, we also find the "great eagle, with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors," mentioned by Ezekiel, who says the eagle rests on "the top of the cedar" (Ez 17:3). This remarkable natural grandeur often bows down before divine omnipotence: "Lebanon would not provide fuel enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt offering," Isaiah assures us, further exalting divine greatness, which is even more immense than the "glory of Lebanon" (Is 40:16; Is 35:2).

And in the New Testament?

Lebanon is not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament. However, it may nevertheless be referred to. The town of Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle, turning water into wine at a wedding, could correspond to the modern-day town of Qana in southern Lebanon. Then again, it could also correspond to either Kafr Cana or Khirbet Cana in Israel. Archaeologists have not reached a conclusion, but Antonio Andary of the Maronite Foundation supports the Lebanese hypothesis. He also believes that Jesus may have visited Lebanon on other occasions, notably when he met the Canaanite woman, which he believes took place near Sidon. Finally, he asserts that the Transfiguration could have taken place at the top of Mount Hebron, a mountain in the Golan Heights that belongs partly to Lebanon and Syria (but has been occupied by Israel since 2024). The traditional location, however, is Mount Tabor in Israel.