

Church of St. Theresa

A Caring Community Reaching Out To One Another in Christ

2855 St. Theresa Avenue, Bronx, New York

SUNDAY MASSES

Saturday at 5:00pm,
Sunday at 7:30am, 9:00am(Italian),
10:30am(Family Mass) 12:15pm ,
1:30PM(Spanish) & 5:00pm

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday thru Saturday 8:00am & 9:00am

DEVOTIONS

Miraculous Medal & St. Theresa
Novenas after Monday morning Masses
St. Anthony Novena after Tuesday
morning Masses.

Thursday 12 Noon Mass
& Eucharistic Adoration

Exposition & Benediction of the
Blessed Sacrament First Friday 6:00PM

CONFESSION

Saturdays from 4:00pm to 5:00pm
and by appointment

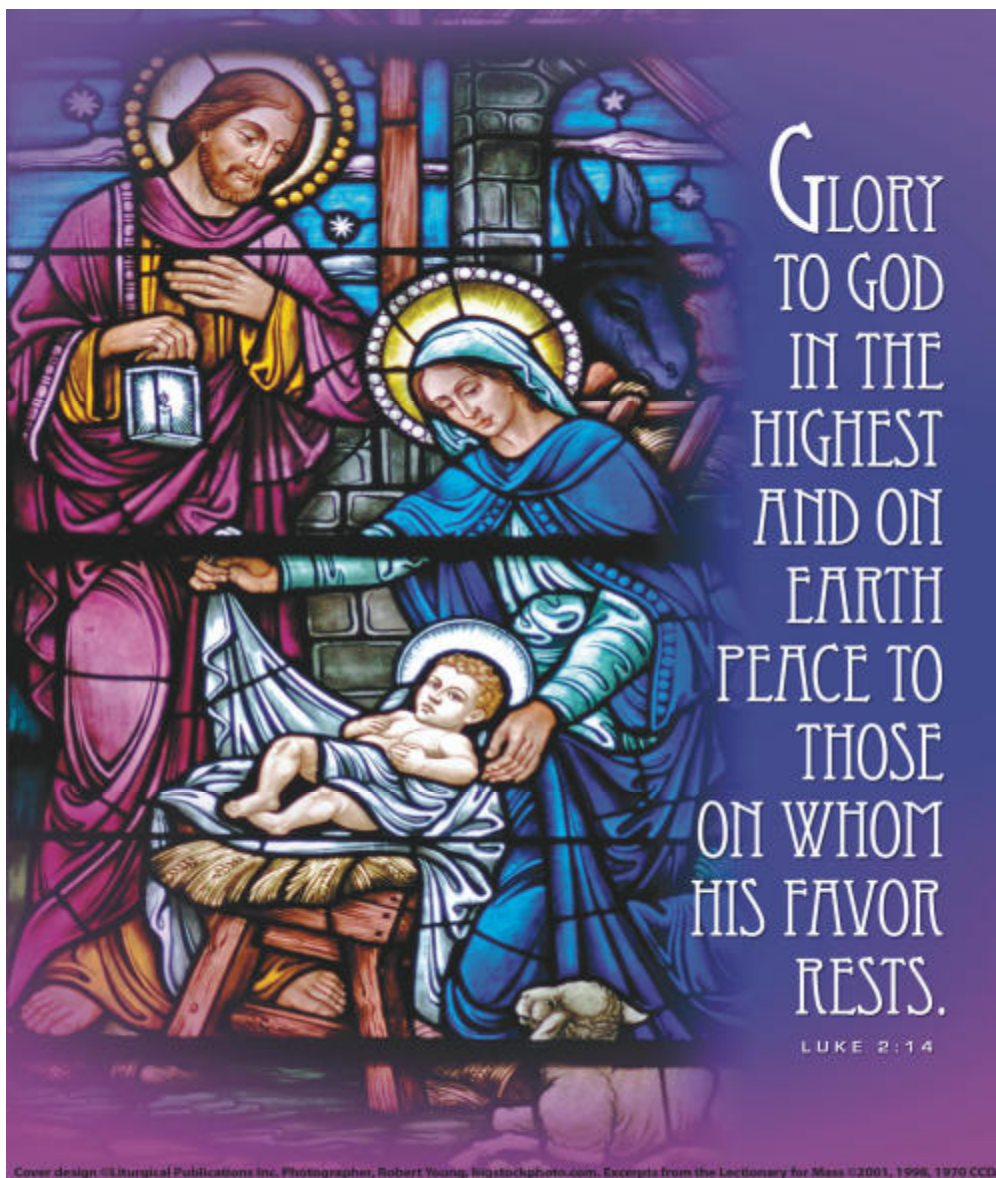
BAPTISMS

Baptisms take place most Sundays
after the 1:30pm Mass.
We ask parents to attend the Baptism
preparation meeting. Register at the
Rectory for the meeting.
The date of the Baptism will be
discussed at the Baptism meeting.

MARRIAGES

Call the Rectory at least six months in
advance of the wedding date to make an
appointment with parish clergy.

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CHURCH OF ST. THERESA, BRONX

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER DERIVAN

Our gospel for this Fourth Sunday of Advent is the gospel of announcing. We call it that—the mystery of the Annunciation—the Angel Gabriel sent from God to announce to Mary that God the Father asked her to be the one through whom Jesus His Son would come into the world, the mother from whom Jesus would bring about our salvation. Some of the saints said that when the Angel asked Mary to be the Mother of Jesus, the whole world, indeed heaven too, held its breath waiting for an answer. What would the humble Mary say? Here was this young girl, probably twelve or thirteen years of age, being asked the most important question ever asked of a human being. Would she be the Mother of the Savior? The great St. Bernard, the great apostle of Mary, said that at the Annunciation it was as if God was knocking on the door, waiting for Mary to answer. And she did. Mary said “Yes,” not only a one word “Yes,” but a “Yes” that expressed itself in this way, “I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word.” We could say that this gospel is a double announcing—the Angel announcing God’s plan to Mary and Mary’s announcing that she was ready to accept God’s will, ready to be the Mother of the Son of God.

This was the announcing. But it was not the only announcing. Someone else received an announcing. Like so many other holy people in the Scripture, this man received his announcing in a dream. The angel spoke to him and announced that the child Mary would have would be the Son of God. Of course I am speaking of St. Joseph, Good St. Joseph, the humble carpenter of Nazareth chosen by God to be the husband of Mary and the foster father of her Son. Here was the angel’s announcing to Joseph. Listen to the holy words:

*"Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.
For it is through the Holy Spirit
that this child has been conceived in her.
She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins."
When Joseph awoke,
he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him."*

Joseph accepted the announcing, just as Mary did. Joseph was ready to do his part in God’s plan of saving the world, just as Mary was. Here is this young man, not the old man in some of our pictures, but a young man not much older than many of our young men in our families. He was ready to do his job, not just the job of the carpenter, but the job of bringing Mary to Bethlehem, the job of being there for Jesus’ birth, later on the job of protecting Mary and Jesus from the murderous threats of King Herod, the job of helping Jesus to prepare for His mission as the Savior of the world.

I think the most important thing about St. Joseph is that he welcomed Jesus and made him his own. Of course, he was only Jesus’ foster father. He knew that. But it did not matter. When the angel announced to Mary that Jesus would be her own, so too the angel invited Joseph to make Jesus his own too. And we are invited to do the same. The angel announces Jesus to us on this final Sunday of Advent. And Jesus waits for us to announce that we are welcoming Him, just as St. Joseph did. Turn to St. Joseph today. He will help you to make Jesus your own.

There is a beautiful Christmas song honoring St. Joseph. We can imagine Joseph singing these words on the first Christmas night. It is called “Joseph’s Lullaby:”

*Go to sleep my Son
This manger for your bed
You have a long road before You
Rest Your little head*

*Can You feel the weight of Your glory?
Do You understand the price?
Or does the Father guard Your heart for now
So You can sleep tonight?*

*Go to sleep my Son
Go and chase Your dreams
This world can wait for one more moment
Go and sleep in peace*

*I believe the glory of Heaven
is lying in my arms tonight
But Lord, I ask that He for just this moment
Simply be my child*

*Go to sleep my Son
Baby, close Your eyes
Soon enough You’ll save the day
But for now, dear Child of mine
Oh my Jesus, sleep tight*

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRIESTS AND DEACON

Dear Parishioners:

In the days before the first Christmas, over two thousand years ago, the Magi, the Wise Men from the East, were traveling across the desert in search of the Newborn King. **“We have seen His star at its rising and we have come to worship Him.”** Dear friends, we are all like the holy Magi. We travel across the desert of our lives. We face hardships and obstacles, but we carry within us a blessed hope that our journey will lead us to the Promised One, to Jesus, God’s Son.

Our retired Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has reminded us that we are all **“pilgrims in the footsteps of the Magi.”** Think of that in these days before Christmas. Spiritually put yourselves with the Magi. Share their eager expectation, their blessed hope, their profound love. Picture yourself with them as they come to Bethlehem and find in the manger the Lord of heaven and earth. And just as they brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, so too you must bring your gifts. As Pope Benedict says, we must all bring Him **“the gold of our freedom, the frankincense of our prayer and devotion, and the myrrh of our love.”**

We wish to take this opportunity to thank you, our faithful parishioners, for your wonderful support of our parish throughout the past year. Thank you especially for your continued help during these difficult months when the Covid 19 pandemic has affected us all. It has changed so much in our lives. But one thing that has not changed is your love for St. Theresa Parish. I ask your continued help, materially and spiritually. Help us to keep **“St. Theresa Strong.”**

We look forward to welcoming you at Christmas Mass. Remember, again as Pope Benedict tells us, “Present on the altar is the One whom the Magi saw lying in the manger, Christ the living Bread who came down from heaven to give life to the world.” We, your priests, want you to know that you and your families will be in our prayers at all of our Christmas Masses. Please pray for our parish. Please pray for us.

Merry Christmas!

Father Thomas B. Derivan
Father Edmundo Gomez
Deacon Robert Carolan

Father Joseph Ligory
Father Robert Imbelli
Salesian Fathers

THIS MONDAY IS RECONCILIATION MONDAY:



Each year, during Advent and Lent, Cardinal Dolan has directed all churches to have a “Reconciliation (Confession) Monday” with several hours for the opportunity for confession. Here in our church confessions will be heard from 3PM until 9PM tomorrow (Monday) December 21. We invite you to take this opportunity to come to confession as you prepare for Christmas. If you have been away from the sacraments, be assured that Our Lord is waiting for you with His mercy and love. Please bring this information to others who may wish to “Come Home for Christmas.”

Some simple points about making your confession:

1. Prepare by examining your conscience, thinking of serious sins since your last confession and any other matters you wish to confess.
2. During this pandemic, we are not able to use the regular confessionals. You will see that we have two “confession stations,” one by the sacristy and the other in the front by the baptismal font. Of course, please make sure you have your mask.
3. Those who are waiting for confession should stand at a respectful distance to preserve confidentiality, observing the proper social distancing as marked by the blue tape in the aisles.
4. When you enter the confession station, you may either kneel or stand. Wait for the priest to greet you with the Sign of the Cross. Then say, “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been ... since my last confession.”
5. Speak loud enough for the priest to hear you, but not so loud for other people to hear.
6. Simply confess your sins.
7. The priest will give you a penance, prayers to say or something to do.
8. Then recite the Act of Contrition (several forms are listed below).
9. The priest will give you the absolution which is the forgiveness of your sins.
10. When you leave the confessional, spend a few moments in your private prayer. Recite your penance and thank God for His mercy and forgiveness.

Several Acts of Contrition (select one to say in your confession);

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His Name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

or

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

or

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.

MESSAGE FROM OUR HOLY FATHER POPE FRANCIS FOR THIS SUNDAY

This Sunday just before Christmas, we listen to the Gospel of the Annunciation (cf. Lk 1:26-38).

In this Gospel passage, we notice a contrast between the promises of the angel and Mary's response. This contrast is manifested in the *dimension* and *content* of the expressions of the two protagonists. The angel says to Mary: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever" (vv. 30-33). It is a long revelation which opens unprecedented possibilities. The Child that will be born to this humble girl from Nazareth will be called Son of the Most High. It is not possible to conceive of a higher dignity than this. And after Mary's question in which she asks for an explanation, the angel's revelation becomes even more detailed and surprising.

On the other hand, Mary's reply is a short sentence that does not speak of glory. It does not speak of privilege but only of willingness and service: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (v. 38). The content is also different. Mary does not exalt herself before the prospect of becoming the mother of the Messiah, but rather remains modest and expresses her acceptance of the Lord's plan. Mary does not boast. She is humble and modest. She always remains the same.

This contrast is meaningful. It makes us understand that Mary is truly humble and does not try to be noticed. She recognizes that she is small before God and she is happy to be so. At the same time, she is aware that the fulfillment of God's plan depends on her response, and that therefore she is called to accept it with her whole being.

In this circumstance, Mary's behavior corresponds perfectly to that of the Son of God when he comes into the world. He wants to become the Servant of the Lord, to put himself at the service of humanity to fulfill the Father's plan. Mary says: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord"; and the Son of God upon entering the world says: "Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God" (Heb 10:7). Mary's attitude fully mirrors this statement by the Son of God who also becomes the son of Mary. Thus Our Lady shows that she is in perfect accord with God's plan. Furthermore she reveals herself as a disciple of his Son, and in the Magnificat, she will be able to proclaim that God has "exalted those of low degree" (Lk 1:52) because with her humble and generous response, she has obtained great joy and also great glory.

As we admire our Mother for this response to God's call to mission, we ask her to help each of us to welcome God's plan into our lives with sincere humility and brave generosity.

Angelus Message, December 24, 2017

OUR CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE



This week, of course, we will be celebrating the beautiful Feast of the Birth of Our Savior. We want to review for you our schedule of Masses for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day so that you can properly prepare to celebrate this feast day. Remember that, above all, Christmas is a Feast Day, one which we celebrate at Mass with Our Lord Himself.

Our schedule of Christmas Masses is as follows:

- **Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th**—Masses will be at 3:00PM, 5:00PM, and 7:00PM. Tickets have been distributed to those who wish to come to these Masses. Please note: Only those with tickets will be able to come to these Masses because of New York State regulations on the number of people in church. All tickets have already been distributed to those who came to our Sunday Masses on the past two weekends.
- **Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th**—Masses follow our Sunday schedule—7:30AM, 9:00AM(Italian), 10:30AM, 12:15PM, 1:30(Spanish) and 5:00PM.

Please bring to the attention of neighbors and friends. Remind them to "**Come Home for Christmas.**"

PETITION BOOK

Have you noticed our Petition Book in the vestibule of the Church? Every Saturday before the 5:00PM Mass, the petitions entered into the book for that week are brought up to the altar of the Blessed Mother, where they remain for all the weekend Masses. Please pray for these intentions.

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THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT - ARE YOU A PLAYER?



It's standing room only for that late afternoon Christmas Mass featuring a "live" Christmas Pageant. A quick glance around demonstrates that more than "family" of the youngsters with a role in the Pageant fill up those pews. There are the Vigil Mass "regulars," of course. And surely the relatives of children participating, coming early, cameras in hand.

And there are others, often people rarely seen at Mass in any season. They may well be Catholics who have not been to Mass for a long time for reasons known to them and the Lord. They may also be people with no faith commitment, but curious about the Church. What better time to come and take a look? Christmas, the birth of the God-Man, and a liturgy where the Pageant makes the "story" that much more real.

While pundits ponder the why's of the Christmas Pageant "turnout," St. Francis of Assisi would find it no surprise at all. With a producer's eye for a "natural" event like this, Francis understands that the Pageant is about real people, flesh and blood versus statues, literally bringing the Greatest of Stories to life once again.

For the celebration of the Incarnation is all about Jesus taking on body and soul in this world - and then never really leaving. The Presence of the Almighty. Here. Now. That quiet, powerful, loving Presence, perfectly at home in the midst of the unpredictable chaos that shadows any "standing only" event. The Savior came into the world in a way no one expected.

And like the First Christmas in Bethlehem, or the Pageant St. Francis organized in the Italian mountains, the local parish Christmas Pageant will be a special moment of grace. Some effects are evident; others, known to God alone.

And those of us who attend see and hear the whole thing. The nervous girls on the edge of the crowd. The smiling little boy gazing off into space. The elderly gentleman with tears in his eyes.

For we are players in our own way. Not just spectators - or tele-viewers, waiting for the next commercial. We are here, present, as the Gospel proclaims the wonderful Good News first heralded over two thousand years ago.

It is a sacred moment, in our own time, with energy enough to carry us into a New Year and beyond. Even with the heat of a crowded moment. The "traffic jam" that awaits our departure from church. The greeting of old and familiar faces in this special crowd, as well as old and sacred memories. There's nothing quite like it. Expect perhaps, the heart-felt "Merry Christmas" to one another, on the way out of Church and back into the world Jesus came to make holy.

(From Franciscan Mission Associates)

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER FOR THE HUMAN FAMILY

Lord, Heavenly Father, hear our Christmas prayer for family life.

Enlighten our minds to see clearly that we are all brothers and sisters in You.

Make us more sensitive to each other's pains and needs and more aware that wherever suffering exists - at home or in far-off countries we cannot be indifferent.

Increase our faith and enable us to touch each other's lives with understanding and hope.

Help us to be true members of Your Family, saved by Your infinite love and determined to share that love by being instruments of joy and peace to the world.

Give us the courage to accomplish Your will as we celebrate the birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen

**The Servant of God Terence Cardinal Cooke
Bethlehem - 1971**



**DECEMBER 21st
SAINT PETER CANISIUS
Priest and Doctor († 1597)**

Peter was a native of Nijmegen, Holland, at that time part of the Diocese of Cologne. His father, a burgermeister, hoped to see him settled in the law, but Peter turned to theology. He was drawn to the Jesuits while attending a retreat given by Saint Peter Faber, one of the order's founding members. He soon became a sought after teacher and advisor.

In 1549, Peter accepted a mission to Germany, then in the throes of the Protestant Reformation. Peter made a personal pledge to "live and die" for the German people, and all his efforts—teaching, counseling, and preaching—were aimed at renewing and reviving the faith of the Germans. With great energy and fervor, Peter responded to the challenges posed by the Reformers with a diverse output of writings, including his influential catechisms. He founded universities, drawing in both Catholics and Protestants with his sound approach. And everywhere he went, he succored the poor and visited the imprisoned.

According to Pope Benedict XVI, in all his encounters with Lutherans, Peter had an "ability to combine harmoniously fidelity to dogmatic principles with the respect that is due to every person." Peter is lauded as the "second Apostle to Germany," after Saint Boniface. He was made a Doctor of the Church in 1925.

Loving Father, through the intercession of Saint Peter Canisius, ignite within my heart zeal for the preaching of the Gospel.





PLEASE PRAY FOR THE RECENTLY DECEASED
MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH AND THEIR FAMILIES
DENISE M. HRACS



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OF
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IN MEMORY
OF
MARY, SR. GRACE SABETELLO & FRANCES ACKERLY
LOVE, CARMEL & FAMILY

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE FOR LOCAL CHURCHES



ST. BENEDICT

Christmas Eve - Vigil 4:00PM & 10:00PM
Christmas Day - 7:00AM & 11:00AM

ST. FRANCIS DE CHANTAL

Christmas Eve - Vigil 4:00PM English & 5:30PM Spanish
Christmas Day - 8:30AM, 10:00AM & 11:30AM

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

Christmas Eve - Vigil 4:00PM Family Mass &
12 Midnight Mass
Christmas Day - 8:00AM, 10:00AM, & 12:00 Noon

ST. MARY STAR OF THE SEA

Christmas Eve - Mass 8:00PM
Christmas Day - 9:00AM & 11:00AM



SATURDAY DECEMBER 19, 2020

5:00PM Rose & Felice Polito

SUNDAY DECEMBER 20, 2020

7:30AM Terence Lorino

9:00AM Patricia Musano

10:30AM Anthony Fata

12:15PM Atilio Persic

1:30PM Antonio Gomez

5:00PM Parishioners of St. Theresa

MONDAY DECEMBER 21, 2020

8:00AM Zef Kurti & Manjola Kola (Living)

9:00AM Connie Greco

TUESDAY DECEMBER 22, 2020

8:00AM Kola Family

9:00AM Frank DiPolo

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 23, 2020

8:00AM Richard Tulipano

9:00AM Rose Mancini (Anniversary)

THURSDAY DECEMBER 24, 2020

8:00AM Carmilina Frangella

9:00AM Nicoletta Ferrara

3:00PM Sr. Jean Catherine O.P.

5:00PM Luke Turrisi

7:00PM Parishioners of St. Theresa

FRIDAY DECEMBER 25, 2020

7:30AM Christmas Intention

9:00AM Christmas Intention

10:30AM Christmas Intention

12:15AM Christmas Intention

1:30PM Christmas Intention

5:00PM Christmas Intention

SATURDAY DECEMBER 26, 2020

8:00AM Grace Capone

9:00AM Mary Beth Fitzpatrick

5:00PM Landi & Gregoria Families

SUNDAY DECEMBER 27, 2020

7:30AM Parishioners of St. Theresa

9:00AM Dino & Olga Salati

10:30AM Josephine DePalma

12:15PM Sonny Zeolla

1:30PM Francisca Gonzalez

5:00PM Bob DeGennaro & Michael Rocco



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