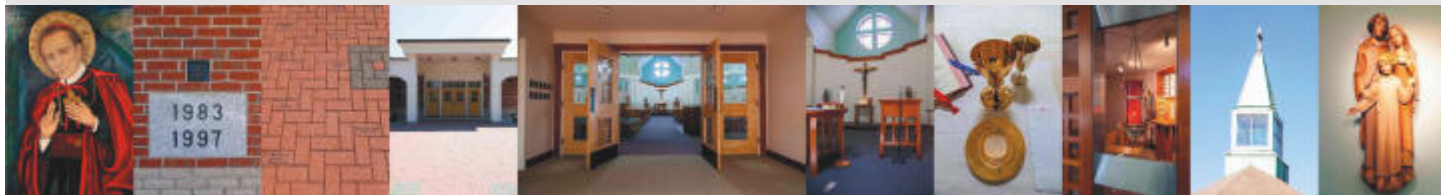


SAINT JOHN NEUMANN PARISH

708 Milford Rd (Rte 101A), Merrimack, NH 03054 — SJNNH.ORG



HOLY FAMILY December 26, 2021

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Eileen Buckley
Business Manager / Parish Secretary
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MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday (Anticipatory) 5:30 PM
Sunday 8:00 AM
Sunday 10:00 AM
Sunday (Labor Day thru Memorial Day) ... 6:00 PM
Daily (Mon, Wed-Fri) 12:15 PM

CONFESSION

Saturday 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
And before/after daily Mass, or by appointment.

BAPTISM

Parents must attend a Parent Baptism Class before the baptism of their child. The class is offered the first Sunday of each month following the 10:00 AM Mass.

MARRIAGE

Please contact the office at least six months prior to the wedding date. The diocese requires Marriage Prep.

VISITS TO THE HOMEBOUND AND SICK, ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call the office to request home or hospital visitation.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

RCIA is the process of formation offered to those who seek to become Catholic. For information, please call the office.

GUARDIAN OF THE REDEEMER

"Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife." —Mt 1:24

The excerpts below are from the first homily of Pope Francis' pontificate. His topic was the role of St Joseph, custos [Lt., keeper/custodian/guard] and protector of the redeemer. Elected as the bishop of Rome and successor St Peter on 13 Mar 2013, Pope Francis chose to be installed on 19 Mar 2013, the Solemnity of St Joseph. Pope St John Paul II's apostolic exhortation Redemptoris Custos [Guardian of the Redeemer, 15 Aug 1989] speaks of the role of St Joseph at greater length.



THE HOLY FAMILY [detail]
by Bartolome Esteban Murillo (d. 1682)

DEAR Brothers and Sisters, I thank the Lord that I can celebrate this Holy Mass for the inauguration of my Petrine ministry on the solemnity of St Joseph, the spouse of the Virgin Mary and the patron of the universal Church. It is a significant coincidence, and it is also the name-day of my venerable predecessor [Josef Ratzinger]: we are close to him with our prayers, full of affection and gratitude.

In the Gospel we heard that "Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife" (Mt 1:24). These words already point to the mission which God entrusts to Joseph: he is to be the custos, the protector. The protector of whom? Of Mary and Jesus; but this protection is then extended to the Church, as Blessed John Paul II pointed out: "Just as St Joseph took loving care of Mary and gladly dedicated himself to Jesus Christ's upbringing, he likewise watches over and protects Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, of which the Virgin Mary is the exemplar and model" (Redemptoris Custos, 1).

How does Joseph exercise his role as protector? Discreetly, humbly and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand. From the time of his betrothal



to Mary until the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, he is there at every moment with loving care. As the spouse of Mary, he is at her side in good times and bad, on the journey to Bethlehem for the census and in the anxious and joyful hours when she gave birth; amid the drama of the flight into Egypt and during the frantic search for their child in the Temple; and later in the day-to-day life of the home of Nazareth, in the workshop where he taught his trade to Jesus.

How does Joseph respond to his calling to be the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church? By being constantly attentive to God, open to the signs of God's presence and receptive to God's plans, and not simply to his own. This is what God asked of David, as we heard in the first reading. God does not want a house built by men, but faithfulness to his word, to his plan. It is God himself who builds the house, but from living stones sealed by his Spirit. Joseph is a "protector" because he is able to hear God's voice and be guided by his will; and for this reason he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping. He can look at things realistically, he is in touch with his surroundings, he can make truly wise decisions. In him, dear friends, we learn how to respond to God's call, readily and willingly, but we also see the core of the Christian vocation, which is Christ! Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation!

The vocation of being a "protector", however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as St Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!

Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility, whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened. Tragically, in every period of history there are "Herods" who plot death, wreak havoc, and mar the countenance of men and women.

Please, I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be "protectors" of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world! But to be "protectors", we also have to keep watch over ourselves! Let us not forget that hatred, envy and pride defile our lives! Being protectors,

then, also means keeping watch over our emotions, over our hearts, because they are the seat of good and evil intentions: intentions that build up and tear down! We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness!

Here I would add one more thing: caring, protecting, demands goodness, it calls for a certain tenderness. In the Gospels, St Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!

Today, together with the feast of St Joseph, we are celebrating the beginning of the ministry of the new Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter, which also involves a certain power. Certainly, Jesus Christ conferred power upon Peter, but what sort of power was it? Jesus' three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross. He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked St Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!

In the second reading, St Paul speaks of Abraham, who, "hoping against hope, believed" (Rom 4:18). Hoping against hope! Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like St Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God, which has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock which is God.

To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the Bishop of Rome is called to carry out, yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly. Let us protect with love all that God has given us!

I implore the intercession of the Virgin Mary, St Joseph, SS Peter and Paul, and St Francis, that the Holy Spirit may accompany my ministry, and I ask all of you to pray for me! Amen.

LAST WEEK

Not available at time of printing —
posted online at SJNNH.ORG.

Thank you for your generosity!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holy Day of Obligation
MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

1 Jan 2022

31 Dec (Fri), Vigil Mass 5:30 PM
1 Jan (Sat), Holy Day 10:00 AM

WEEKLY CALENDAR

26 Dec, SUNDAY — HOLY FAMILY

8:00 AM | Mass
10:00 AM | Mass
4:30 PM | Confession (until 5:30 PM)
6:00 PM | Mass
7:00 PM | Adoration

27 Dec, MONDAY — *With the exception of daily Mass, SJN offices are closed this week (Dec 27-31).

12:15 PM | Daily Mass

28 Nov, TUESDAY

7:00 PM | Scout Meeting

29 Dec, WEDNESDAY

9:30 AM | Knitting Group (meets every other Wednesday)
10:00 AM | Faith Sharing
12:15 PM | Daily Mass

30 Dec, THURSDAY

12:15 PM | Daily Mass

31 Dec, FRIDAY (day of penance)

10:00 AM | Food Pantry
12:15 PM | Daily Mass
5:30 PM | HOLY DAY MASS

1 Jan, SATURDAY — MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, Holy Day of Obligation (obligation dispensed)

10:00 AM | HOLY DAY MASS
4:00 PM | Confession
5:30 PM | 5:30 Mass — EPIPHANY MASS

PAPAL PRAYER INTENTIONS

JAN 2022 — For True Human Fraternity

We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognized, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family.

FEB — For Religious Sisters and Consecrated Women

We pray for religious sisters and consecrated women; thanking them for their mission and their courage; may they continue to find new responses to the challenges of our times.

MAR — For a Christian Response to Bioethical Challenges

We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.

APR — For Health Care Workers

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

MAY — For Faith-Filled Young People

We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary's life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service.

JUN — For Families

We pray for Christian families around the world; may they embody and experience unconditional love and advance in holiness in their daily lives.

JUL — For the Elderly

We pray for the elderly, who represent the roots and memory of a people; may their experience and wisdom help young people to look towards the future with hope and responsibility.

MASS INTENTIONS & OIL LAMP

Dec 26 (Sun), 10:00 AM SJN Parishioners
Dec 26, 10:00 AM Dureen Caron (req. by Fitts family)
Dec 26, 6:00 PM Holy Souls
Dec 27 (Mon), 12:15 PM Deceased clergy of the diocese
Dec 31 (Fri), 5:30 PM Anne Matsoni (Sanctuary Lamp)
Jan 1 (Sat), 10:00 AM SJN Parishioners

The Code of Canon Law confirms the practice of offering Mass(es) for particular intentions is ancient: "The Christian faithful who give an offering to apply the Mass for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by that offering share its concern to support its ministers and works" (945 §2).

The Blessed Sacrament Sanctuary Lamp burns for an octave (eight days) in memory of an individual(s) or for the donor's intention.

AUG — For Small Businesses

We pray for small and medium sized businesses; in the midst of economic and social crisis, may they find ways to continue operating, and serving their communities.

SEP — For the Abolition of the Death Penalty

We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country.

OCT — For a Church Open to Everyone

We pray for the Church; ever faithful to, and courageous in preaching the Gospel, may the Church be a community of solidarity, fraternity and welcome, always living in an atmosphere of synodality.

NOV — For Children Who Suffer

We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be guaranteed access to education and the opportunity to experience family affection.

DEC — For Volunteer Not-for-Profit Organizations

We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

HOLY HOUR

FRIDAY, following the 12:15 PM daily Mass and SUNDAY, following the 6:00 PM Mass.

Other than Holy Communion, no act of worship pleases God so much as VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. In the words of Pope St Paul VI (d. 1987), "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament are a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord" (Pope St Paul VI, d. 1987).

— TAX NOTICE —

If you would like a statement of your 2021 contributions to the parish, please fill out the CONTRIBUTIONS REQUEST CARD (located alongside the bulletins in the foyer) and place it in the collection basket. You can also request a statement by emailing us your:

- Name

- Address
- Phone #
- Envelope #

Statements will go out in February. Your financial support, especially during the past few months, has been very much appreciated!

— AMAZON SMILE —

Please consider supporting our St John Neumann FOOD PANTRY whenever you purchase items through AMAZON.COM. To participate, go to:

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Bob Fregault (Chairman)

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