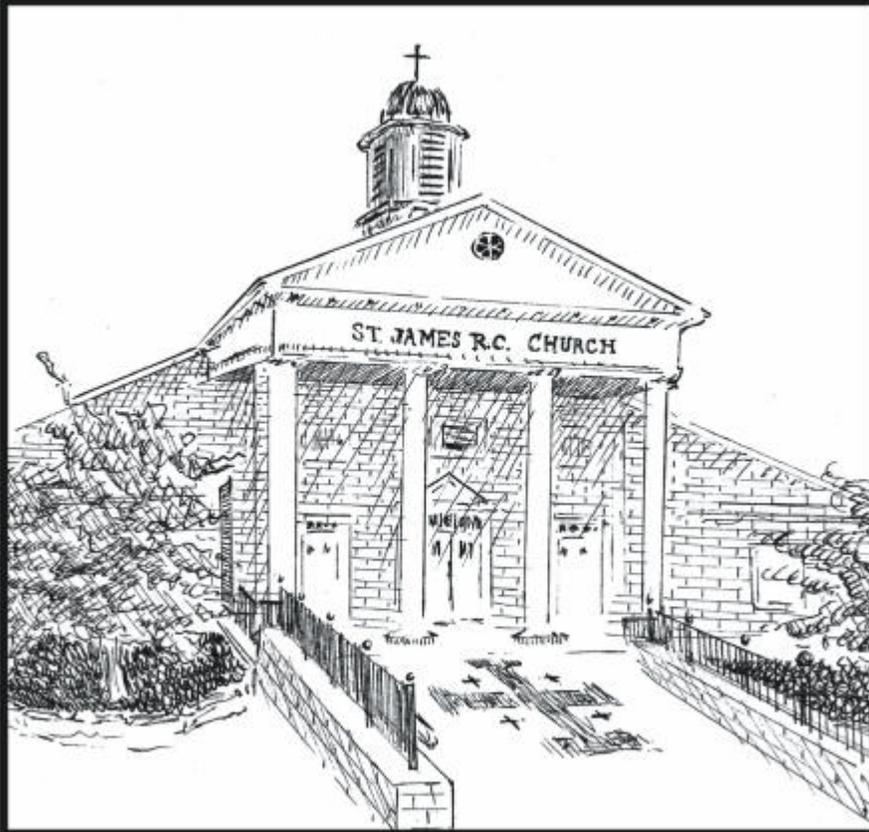


St. James R.C. Church
December 20, 2020
Fourth Sunday in Advent



429 Route 25A, Setauket, New York 11733-3829

Parish Office: (631) 941.4141

Fax: (631) 751.6607

Faith Formation Office: (631) 751.7287

Email: parish@stjamessetauket.org

Website: www.stjamessetauket.org

Office Hours: M-F 9am-4pm (closed for lunch 12-12:30)

Sat. 9am-2pm

“Be doers of the word and not hearers only”

2020 Mission Statement

We, the Catholic community of the Three Village area, formed as the Body of Christ through the waters of Baptism, are a pilgrim community journeying toward the fullness of the Kingdom of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, nourished by the Eucharist and formed by the Gospel.

We strive to respond to Jesus' invitation: to be faithful and fruitful disciples; to be a Good Samaritan to (our) neighbor and enemy; stewards of and for God's creation and living witnesses of Faith, Hope and Charity ... so that in Jesus' name, we may be a welcoming community, respectful of life in all its diversities.

Weekday Masses

Monday – Saturday: 8:00 am

Sunday Masses

Saturday: 5:00 pm (Youth)*

*live streamed & taped for viewing on our website and FB pages

Sunday: 8:00 am, 9:30 am (Family), 11:30am (Choir)

Holy Days of Obligation

Vigil: 7:30 pm

Day: 8:00am, 12 Noon

Special Needs Mass:

Second Saturday of the month at 1:00pm

Nocturnal Adoration:

First Friday of the Month, 7:30-8:30pm

Reconciliation

Saturdays 4:00 – 4:45 pm or by appointment

Rev. James-Patrick Mannion, Pastor

frjim@stjamessetauket.org (ext. 322)

Rev. Robert Scheckenback, Assoc. Pastor

frbob@stjamessetauket.org (ext. 320)

Dcn. Louis Anetrella

Rev. John Fitzgerald, in residence

Rev. Mike S. Ezeatu, in residence (ext. 326)

Business Manager: Todd Bradshaw(ext.312)

Dir. of Outreach: Kathy Vaeth (ext. 313)

Dir. of Faith Formation: Louise DiCarlo (ext. 329) Admin. Asst. Joanmarie Zipman (ext. 328)

Finance Manager: Theresa Ellner (ext. 335)

Music Co-Director: Richard Foley (631) 806.1794

Music Co-Director: Miriam Salerno (516)

263.5173

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

(RCIA): Ueli Laeng (631)941.4141

Parish Receptionists:

Megan Peters (M-F)

Nancy Gallagher (Fri and Sat) Cemetery Admin.

Parish Facilities Supervisor: Jeff Fallon

Please visit our parish website (www.stjamessetauket.org) for the latest parish information as well as weekly homilies and virtual weekly Masses. Visit the diocesan website (www.DRVC.org) for diocesan news and schedule



**Mass Intentions
for the week of
December 20, 2020**

Sunday, December 20

8am

9:30am

11:30am

Monday, December 21

8am

Tuesday, December 22

8am

Wednesday, December 23

8am

Thursday, December 24

8am

Friday, December 25

8am

Saturday, December 26

8am

5pm

Sunday, December 27

8am

9:30am

11:30am

Our parishioners, living and deceased
Deceased members of the Scalandre Family
Elizabeth Kossmann,
Kevin Hewitt

Charles Shane Jr.

Mary & Nicholas Combader

Frank & Raymond Mazza

Christmas Special Mass Intentions

Christmas Special Mass Intentions,
Patrick O'Hara,
Felicita Borrero

Adam J. DiRosa
Our parishioners, living and deceased
Christmas Special Mass Intentions, Aidan Hilpert,
Donna Marie Panzella,
Richard Segelken

*Thank you for giving of your time,
talent and treasure*

COLLECTION UPDATE

December 13, 2020: \$ 14,261 (incl. \$7022 FD)
December 15, 2019: \$ 18,754

Please consider making your weekly donations on-line by enrolling at **faith.direct/ny997**.

Doing so enables our ministries to continue to meet the physical and spiritual needs of those in our parish family as well as the larger community who have been impacted by COVID19 and related job losses.

E-giving simplifies your giving and provides consistent support to the parish. **To provide additional assistance, please select the "offset fee option" when setting up your donation, which will help reduce our expenses.**

If you require assistance with the process, please call the parish office (Tuesday 9am-1pm or Friday 9:30-12pm) and make an appointment with Megan or Nancy to set up your Faith Direct on-line giving account.

Enroll today at: www.faithdirect.net

For your continued generosity to St. James Parish of your time, talent and treasure, I offer my deepest appreciation. May God reward your generosity a hundredfold.

~ Fr. Jim

Pope's Intention for Evangelization

For a life of prayer. That our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.



MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Parish of St. James is pleased to provide a number of ways in which our parishioners can memorialize their loved ones. In addition to the celebration of a Mass in their name, parishioners are invited to consider a memorial donation of the bread and wine or altar flowers for the week. The name(s) of your loved one(s) will appear in the bulletin for that week.

In the rear of our church (25A side), near the statue of the Holy Family, you will find a set of candles that offers a top row that can be lit for one year, and holds a plaque showing the name of the person for whom the candle is lit. The offering for a memorial candle is \$250. Please stop by the rectory office or call 631.941.4141 during normal business hours when one of our secretaries will be happy to provide you with additional information on all of these memorial opportunities.

Welcome **Welcome to the Parish of St. James**

No matter your present or past status in the Catholic Church; **No** matter your current family or marital situation;

No matter your past or present affiliation; **No** matter your personal history, age, background, race or color, you are invited, welcomed and accepted at St. James RC Church.

If you are new to the area, we invite you to choose St. James as your parish family.

PARISH INFORMATION

Sacraments

Baptism: Two Sundays per month at 1:30 pm.
Please contact the office after the fourth month of pregnancy to make arrangements.

Holy Matrimony: Please contact the office at least nine months before your desired date.

Anointing of the Sick: By request

Pastoral Council: Mrs. Roni Groth, Mr. John Holownia, Mrs. Josephine Prokop, Mr. Fred Sawicki, Mr. Michael Vaeth, Mrs. Judi Wallace

Parish Finance Committee: Mr. Edward Gutleber, Chair; Mr. Todd Bradshaw (*Business Manager*) Mrs. Theresa Ellner (*Financial Manager*), Mr. Robert Freaso, (*Parish Trustee*), Mr. Thomas Powers (*Parish Trustee*), Mr. Matthew Berger, Mr. Christopher McGeever, Mrs. Judi Wallace

Prayer Opportunities

Nocturnal Adoration: First Fridays 7:30 – 8:30 pm

Recitation of the Rosary: Monday to Saturday after the 8am Mass

Ministries:

Alpha: Mrs. Roni Groth, Mrs. Barbara Jaeckel

Bereavement Ministry: Ms. Catherine Horgan,

Mr. Dennis Reardon (*please call 631.941.4141 x341*)

Camino Café Ministry: Mrs. Sallie Culloton, Mrs. Doreen Corrado

Choir: Mr. Richard Foley, Mrs. Miriam Salerno

Sat 5pm Teen, Sun 9:30am Youth, Sun. 11:30am Adult

Christ in the Marketplace: Mr. Jack Herr (*631.941.4141*)

CYO Board: Mr. Charles Arasi, Chair; Mrs. Samantha Bradshaw,

Mr. John Case, Mr. Michael (Mike) Specht,

Mr. Patrick (Pat) Tunstead

Eucharistic Ministry to Homebound Parishioners: Joan Murray
If you or anyone you know is homebound and would like to receive the Eucharist at home, please call 631.941.4141

Fertility Care Services: Helen McCarthy, R.Ph, PharmD, CFCPI
(*htmcCarthy@optonline.net or 631.455.4137*)

Knights of Columbus, Mother Teresa of Calcutta Council #12006:

Grand Knight, Mr. Jack Simpson

Laudato Si Environmental Ministry: Mr. Robert Becherer

Liturgy Committee: Ms. Louise DiCarlo

Liturgical Ministries: EMHC-Mrs. Kathy Brown, Mrs. Mary Berretta

Readers: Mrs. Peggie McHugh Eletto

Altar Servers: Mrs. Judi Wallace, Peter Morelli, MD

Ushers/Greeters: Mr. Robert Freaso

Men's Monthly Breakfast Gathering: Mr. Tony Casale

Ministry of Consolation: Mrs. Carol Simco

Nocturnal Adoration: Mr. Eric Waxman (631) 689.9759

Our Daily Bread: (631)941.2731 ODB@stjamessetauket.org

Parish Bulletin and Website: Editor, Ms. Catherine Horgan

Contact rectory office 631.941.4141

Parish Liturgical Environment Committee:

Contact rectory office 631.941.4141

Pre-Cana Ministry: Mr. and Mrs. Diane and James Santangelo

Contact rectory office 631.941.4141

RCIA: Mr. Ueli Laeng *Contact the rectory office 631.941.4141*

Respect Life Committee of St. James: Mr. Eric Waxman

631.689.9759. *The Respect Life Committee will meet in the Parish Center each month (September – June) on Coffee Sunday after the 9:30 Mass*

Rosary Altar Society of St. James: Mrs. Patricia Raptoulis at 631.473-3561

Spiritual Direction: Mr. Ueli Laeng *Please call the rectory office 631.941.4141*

St. James Rosary Makers: Mrs. Mary DiBenedetto 631.236.8899

St. James Vigil Ministry: Fr. Jim Mannion, Ms. Louise DiCarlo

Wedding Facilitators: Mrs. Maureen Denzler, Mrs. Chris Weisman

Women's Scripture Study: Mrs. Cathy Roberts SJA 631.689.2645



Parish Policy

Please be reminded that as a matter of policy, any and all events, conferences, meetings, plays, sporting events, fundraising efforts, etc. must have the expressed, written permission of the pastor (or his designee) before plans can be finalized. The parish is a legal entity with certain obligations that must be considered prior to approval of events. This includes the use of the name St. James in any way, shape or form, explicitly or implicitly. Contracts with outside vendors, speakers or service providers cannot be signed by anyone other than the pastor or his designee.



Join us in praying the Holy Rosary after the 8am Mass every 1st Saturday.

"I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all who on the First Saturday of five consecutive months, confess their sins, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the purpose of making reparation to my Immaculate Heart."
~Our Blessed Mother

READINGS AND OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK of December 20, 2020

Sunday, December 20 Third Sunday in Advent

Monday, December 21

St. Peter Canisius, Priest, Doctor of the Church

Sg 2:8-14/Lk 1:39-45

Tuesday, December 22

1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56

Wednesday, December 23

St. John of Kanty, Priest

Mal 3:1-4,23-24/Lk 1:57-66

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve

2 Sm 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16/Lk 1:67-79

Friday, December 25

Christmas Day

Saturday, December 26

St. Stephen, the First Martyr

Sunday, December 27

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

In compliance with Diocesan policy from the Office for the Protection of Children & Young People, (516) 678.5800, ext. 573: If you suspect any child abuse, first contact Child Protective Services at (800) 342.3720 and then contact the Diocesan Hotline at (516) 594.9063. If you believe **someone is in immediate danger**, call Suffolk County Police at 911.



**Mother Teresa Council,
Knights of Columbus**



"Each one of them is Jesus in disguise" ~Mother Teresa



Take twenty minutes out of your day to pray the rosary and you will see the difference it will make in your life.



O COME LET US ADORE HIM!

The more than 100 members of Mother Teresa Council of the Knights of Columbus wish you and your loved ones a very safe and blessed Christmas. May the Baby Jesus remain an important part of your life.

Final Chance to Get Your Christmas Magnet

'Keep Christ in Christmas' magnets, promoting the real meaning of Christmas, will be available after Masses. Get yours now. They make great stocking stuffers!



As a practicing Catholic man, if you'd like to get involved with our Council as a proud Knight, call Fred @ 631-751-7375 about joining this fraternal service organization, whose guiding principles are charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. Or, you may join the organization as an online member by visiting www.kofc.org

*Greetings from the St. James
Rosary Altar Society*

This Sunday is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We are told, "The Earth Brings Forth A Savior"!

The Lighting of our Fourth Advent Candle, tells us that we are drawing even nearer to the Birth of Jesus on the Holy Feast of **Christmas**. The Advent Wreath & Candle Set greatly helps us to prepare for the Babe, **Jesus**.

O Come, Divine Messiah!

O come, Divine Messiah! The world in silence waits the day, When hope shall sing its triumph, and sadness flee away.

UPDATE:

This year we will need to wait for the Spring for a Rosary Social Christmas Gathering. We can call each other or enjoy our friendships by mail and our own personal gathering.

For now, enjoy a wonderful **Advent preparation** with the anticipation of a beautiful "**Christmas celebration**".

To become a member of the Rosary Altar Society please call Pat Raptoulis at: 631.473.3561.

Fourth Sunday of Advent



In a particular way, St. Joseph is a perfect intercessor **during times of trial**. His presence can help preserve unity within the Church and bring peace during difficulties.

Here is a prayer that encapsulates all of these sentiments and cries out to St. Joseph for help.

O most watchful Guardian of the Divine Family, defend the Church. Ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence. O, our most mighty Protector, look favorably upon us and from heaven assist us in this our struggle with the power of darkness; and, as once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live virtuously, to die holily, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.





"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Pray for Our Sick

Please pray for all members of the parish family, especially :

Julia Balzarno-Maglio, Robert Banish, Mary Barretta, Rosemarie Basile, Roberta Brown, Glenn Buro, Keith Buro, Caroline Caggiano, Tony Casale, Michael Carpenter, Carol Cirillo, Brian Darmody, Camille DiCarlo, Arleen Gargiulo, Lauren Giordano, Emma Giuliano, Tom Giuliano, Caleb Hernandez, Terence Hobbes, Nicole Juliano, George LaBriola, Jr., Joseph LaRosa, Mary Maio, Kayla Marianetti, Rudy Mazurczak, Diane McDonald, John McGarvey, Tom McHugh, Gianna Morelli, Brian Newman, Christine El Qadah, Gloria Ruppert, Rose Sangiamo, Debby Saunders, Linda Shannon, Brady Spennato, John Stone, Anya Vulpis, Adelaide Marie Wardrope, Christine Wall, Robert Whitcomb

May they and their families, have health, strength and peace in you, O Lord. Amen.



Pray for Our Military Personnel

Please remember in prayer all of the men and women from our parish and country who serve so selflessly in our Armed Forces.

Keep them, their families, friends and loved ones in prayer as they serve our country at home and on foreign soil.

*U.S. Marine Corp. 2nd Lieutenant Kyle Antonucci
U.S. Army, SPC Patrick Buckley, Afghanistan
U.S. Army Lt. Colonel Erika Holownia
U.S. Army Major Gregory C. Holownia, USA
U.S. Navy SHSN Quintin Lawrence Hurley
U.S. Army, PFC Brandon Leap
U.S. Sergeant Spec. Joseph Mandel, USA
U.S. Air Force SrA Sean T. Murray
U.S. Air Force Capt. Nicole Nowling
U.S. Army, Lt. Daniel Roberts
USMC 1st Lt. Brendan Rose, USA
USMC Lance Corp. Aeon Soler
U.S. Army Major Eric D. Waxman, USA*



THE LOST HAT COMPANY would like to extend a gracious and sincere *THANK YOU* to all parishioners who supported our ministry.

Great News! Your hat makers gave 200% dedication to reach the goal of 1000+ hats, scarfs, gloves, and blankets for 2020 distribution.

The following church outreach programs will benefit:

*St. James RC Church, Setauket
St. Hugh of Lincoln RC Church, Huntington Station,
Hope House Ministries, Port Jefferson
Our Lady of Miraculous Medal RC Church, Wyandanch
St. Margaret of Scotland RC Church, Selden
St. Brigid's RC Church, Westbury
St Patrick's RC Church, Smithtown
Smithtown Gospel Tabernacle, Smithtown
St Frances Cabrini RC Church, Coram
Plus 2 other churches*

A thousand heads will stay warm this winter. We could not have completed our mission without your support. However, our coffers are now empty and we need to once again ask for your support. If everyone gave a \$1.00 or more it would help toward our 2021 goal. Your donation can be mailed or put into an envelope addressed to the Lost Hat Company and dropped into the collection basket.

NOTE: Cash intended for LHC should not be put in the collection basket without an envelope as Washington, Lincoln or Hamilton will not be able to tell Fr. Jim where you intended them to go

We thank Fr. Jim for allowing us to occupy needed closet space to store our 1000+ hats. Without his support our ministry could not operate.

KEEP WELL



In light of the public health emergency surrounding the COVID 19 outbreak, let us continue to pray to St. Raphael the Archangel:

Because you are the “medicine of God” we humbly pray to you to calm our fears and anxieties, and to grant healing to those suffering from the Corona virus; offer your protection and strength to those in the medical professions offering care to those so afflicted.

May we trust in the Lord, who is our Shepherd, as we walk through this valley of “fear and death”, in this time of darkness. May we be anointed in the Spirit’s love and ask that you always direct us in the way of peace, health and salvation. Amen.



Mask It or Casket! *A reminder about the importance of wearing a mask in church. Your cooperation is vital in order for us to publicly celebrate Mass.*



BUSINESS MANAGER WANTED!

The Parish of St. Gerard Majella in Port Jefferson Station is seeking a full time Business Manager to oversee the physical and financial resources of the parish.

This position requires flexibility in schedule to attend meetings, coordinate projects and attend to emergencies. This position reports directly to the Pastor. College degree required, preferably in Accounting or related fields.

Send cover letter and resume to Fr. Gregory Rannazzisi, Pastor, by email only: frgreg@stgmajella.org.



Help Wanted



Throughout the pandemic, our parish has been able to “live stream” our weekend Mass and we will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

We have been truly blessed to have parishioner Jim Townsend and his partner, Corey Arnold, (Bars and Tone Media Production) provide their services during this time. We have recently installed permanent cameras in the church which will facilitate our continued broadcasting capabilities.

This provides an exciting opportunity for members of our parish to learn the technology and become part of the team that makes this happen every week! No experience necessary—just a willingness to learn and to help St. James Parish. Ongoing training and support will be provided.

Contact Fr. Jim at 631.941.4141 ext. 322

You are cordially invited to attend our Fourth Annual “Gentle Eve” Celebration

Thursday, December 31, 2020

7:00pm

For the past three years, we have offered a “Gentle Eve” celebration, an alternative way in which to observe New Year’s Eve without the noise and pressure that usually accompanies it.

If you were with us at any of those events, we hope to see you again!

For those who weren’t able to join us, this is your chance to share in the “Gentle Eve” experience as we join together to celebrate and pray the Mass in thanksgiving for the year about to end, and offer one another hope for the year about to begin.

In years past, this very special celebration of the Eucharist was followed by a low key buffet dinner, conversation and dessert, all in a relaxing, celebratory atmosphere. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we will be unable to hold our reception this year.

However, our celebration of the Eucharist will take place as usual and we hope you will plan to join us.

If you have not joined us in the past at our “Gentle Eve” Mass, celebrated by Fr. Jim, you will have the opportunity to enjoy subdued sanctuary lighting, scripture readings and musical selections not typically experienced at our weekend celebrations. It is a beautiful way to close out the extremely challenging year we have all experienced, and pray together for God’s blessings for 2021.

DONATING TO ST. JAMES DURING THE COVID 19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

During this time of uncertainty surrounding the *COVID19* virus, many of us will choose to remain at home and not venture out to church or other places where large groups of people may gather. While respecting that choice, please remember that our parish still needs our financial support in order to meet regular operating expenses such as electric bills, heating/cooling, water and payroll.

We recently introduced a new and exciting way for you to support our parish offertory and second collections: *Faith Direct*. With *Faith Direct*, you can make regular automatic contributions to St. James, using your credit/debit card or bank account, the same process that you may use to pay utility bills or make car payments.

Making your donations automatically means relief from the hassle of locating your offertory envelopes as you run out the door on Sunday morning, and guarantees that the church will receive your gifts even if you are unable to attend Mass. There is no fee to you, the parishioner, associated with the use of the *Faith Direct* program. Automatic contributions greatly benefit St. James by providing a predictable cash flow as well as decreasing the time and money the church expends dealing with the envelope system. *Faith Direct* will provide you with personalized offertory cards that you may place in the basket, as well as a year end tax statement.

We find *Faith Direct* to be a “win-win” for both parishioners and the parish.

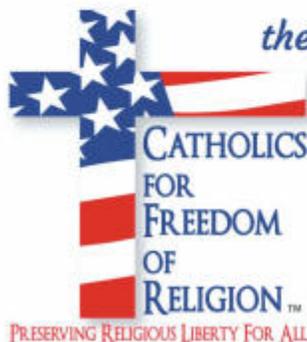
If you’ve not yet enrolled, simply visit: **faith.direct/NY997** to securely enroll on line. For assistance, feel free to call Faith Direct customer service at: 1-866-507-8757 or contact the Parish Office for additional information.

If you prefer to not use technology, please continue to mail your donations to the rectory office.

Thank you for your continued support of St. James.



*In every community, home and heart
the Christ Child is welcomed, freely, openly and joyfully.*



*Wishing a blessed and joyous Christmas from
Catholics for Freedom of Religion*

“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us...” Luke 1:7



Christmas Message from The Respect Life Committee of St. James Parish

Due to the pandemic, the annual Advent poinsettia sale fundraiser, benefitting the Life Center of Long Island (www.lifecenterli.org), has been cancelled. The sale will return next Advent.

In this season, when we especially remember God's amazing gift to all mankind, we want to thank you for your generosity. Your gifts of time, funds and prayers have changed and saved lives!

Thank you cards with "precious feet" lapel pins are available in the church vestibule as our gift to you for your generous support of our pro-life mission and activities throughout the year.

The "precious feet" pin is the exact size and shape of a 10-week unborn baby's feet and is the universal sign of our solidarity with the preborn.

We hope and pray that you have a very Merry Christmas
and a New Year overflowing with God's Blessings!

*"Were Christ to be born in a thousand stables it would be of no avail were He not born each day
anew in each and every heart."*

Advent Wreath Lighting Prayers Advent Week Four

Holy and Gracious God, we light this fourth candle to Love. A Love, which endures all things; which saves all things; which sustains Hope, Peace and Joy.

The enfleshment of Divine Love within the womb of the love of Mary and Joseph; a community of support and love. The incarnation of Love coming to us in the midst of this pandemic, through the community and love of family, friends, and all medical personnel on the front lines of the attack against this virus.

In our poverty and humility; in our hope and faith, we respond to the invitation of Your Love as did Mary: *Yes, Lord, I am but your handmaid, be it done to me according to your word!*

Silently- the Word of eternal Love comes ... may it enter into our hearts and there abide ...

We pray ...

R: O Come Emmanuel, God-with-us; Come. Amen.
Amen.



St. James RC Church

Parish Renovation Capital Campaign Update

"Preserving our Past – Securing our Future for All"

Campaign Goal	\$1,500,000
Total pledged	\$1,403,275
Needed to reach goal	\$ 96,275
% of goal achieved	94%
Paid to date	\$ 767,232
Balance due	\$ 636,043
% of pledges paid	55%
# of gifts	410
Average gift	\$ 3,422

"Completion Campaign" begins - **Help us reach our Goal!**

During the months of December and January we are conducting an effort to raise additional financial support to help us reach our goal of raising \$1.5 million. Many families in the parish have already given generously to the campaign and we truly thank you. Without your financial commitment we would have never been able to undertake such an enormous effort.

To make our *Completion Campaign* a success we ask every new family who has joined the parish since the original campaign to consider a pledge to the best of your financial ability. This pledge can be paid with a 10% down payment (not required) followed by monthly installments over a three year period. We ask those families who have not yet contributed during our original campaign to now join us in making a pledge or onetime gift.

We ask those families who are still paying on their pledge to continue to faithfully making the payments so we can complete the remaining projects.

All Pledges/Donations -- no matter the amount are welcomed, needed and appreciated!



Christmas 2020

DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

To the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

When he was elected as a Successor of St. Peter on March 13, 2013, our Holy Father chose the name Francis. It was a weighty decision with a prophetic message. Especially now, seven years later and with the publication of his latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* from the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi on October 3, 2020, the significance of the choice is clear: Pope Francis connects his papacy to St. Francis.

Through the ministry of our Holy Father, St. Francis of Assisi is close to the Church in these times. Therefore, as we draw near to Bethlehem at the end of this difficult year, I wish to recall two points Pope Francis highlights from the life of St. Francis. One will help us celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord; the other indicates a grace for which to pray during the holy season.

First, in his 2019 Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum: On the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene*, Pope Francis emphasizes St. Francis of Assisi's foundational role in our celebration of Christmas. The Holy Father recalls the origins of the crèche and the first nativity scene inspired by the holy friar in 1223, by which the saint sought "to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem." Importantly, the remembrance of Christ's birth that St. Francis desired to convey was brought alive in Greccio, a small village in Italy, not by statues but by people from the surrounding towns and countryside. Together with St. Francis, his friars, an ox and a donkey, they gathered at a cave to behold a manger full of hay over which the Eucharist was celebrated. That Christmas night, almost 800 years ago, Pope Francis reminds us, "the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present." That night, there was "no distance between the original event and those sharing in its mystery." (2) Encountering Christ, there was simply joy and hope.

This Christmas, in our world laden with the Crosses of COVID-19, political and economic turmoil, racism, financial hardship, and so many other societal ills and challenges – challenges that impact us on Long Island – let us remember this lesson from Greccio: Christmas is an event to be lived. It demands our participation. Like the women and men who embodied that first crèche, we must be present to Christ who is born for us. We must behold and receive Him .

Second, in *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis shows St. Francis as an icon of Christocentric listening. With great humility and charity, the saint reverently listened to others. He was present to the various voices in his life – the voice of God, the voice of his neighbor, the voice of the poor, the voice of the sick, the voice of nature – and by truly hearing them, he was an instrument of peace, healing, and understanding. How different it can be for us! The Holy Father says well what we know: "Today's world is largely a deaf world...At times, the frantic pace of the modern world prevents us from listening attentively to what another person is saying." Aware of this fact, the Pope encourages us, in the midst of our hectic and polarized world, to be like St. Francis and "not lose our ability to listen." (48)

This Christmas, when we approach the crib, let us ask for the grace to be attentive listeners. Let us ask for the grace to be like St. Francis, so that we may hear the voice of God and the voice of our neighbor and respond with the radical charity he exhibited.¹

Like Pope Francis, may we be moved by the example of St. Francis, and may St. Francis of Assisi's love for the Mystery of the Nativity, his ecstatic mysticism, his love for the poor, and his spirit of universal fraternity animate our celebration of Christmas this year.

May God bless you and your families this Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *John O. Barres*

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

¹ Cf. Bishop John O. Barres October 8, 2020 Statement, "The Compelling Figure of St. Francis of Assisi in the Pontificate of Pope Francis and his New Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*"



This past year has been hard, with the COVID pandemic and all the lifestyle changes it brought about. This past election season has been a divisive and acrimonious time with battles played out on social media and sadly, on our own community streets.

This announcement isn't to rehash or address the various and opposing political views offered by political parties, but rather to encourage us to remember, review and reconnect to who we are and what we all mean to one another in friendship and brotherhood/sisterhood.

As we remove our political lawn signs, let us consider putting up in its place a new sign of the times; a sign that reminds us of shared cups of coffee, the borrowed cups of sugar, of our being there for one another in good times and bad, offering the shoulder to cry on, the arm to lean on, the last minute emergency baby sitter, and the extra set of eyes to watch over our kids, pets and homes. A sign that speaks of the HEART of friendship, love, respect ... a sign that represents the best of who we are as Americans, as a people of faith.

Did not Jesus command us to love one another, as He loved us; to love our neighbor as ourselves? And how appropriate for Advent; a season of new beginnings, a season of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, a season anticipating the birth of Love in Jesus.

Make this sign a part of your Advent decorations, place it near your nativity scene or among the 'presents' you might use to decorate your lawn.

The cost is \$10 dollars; the signs can be purchased after Mass or in the rectory during the week. Let's read the signs of the times-**Love**-and let's witness Love in anticipation of the Lord's coming.



A note about CYO Basketball and Volleyball

The St. James CYO board has decided that our teams will NOT participate in the Winter/Spring 2021 basketball (boys and girls) and volleyball (girls) seasons.

As always the safety of our children is our top priority.

Please refer to the St. James CYO website for additional information.

Tune in to "Religion and Rock" with Msgr. Jim Vlaun on Sunday mornings, 7:00am-8:00am on WBAB 102.3FM or 95.3FM on Long Island's East End. Listen on Saturdays at 11:00pm on Sirius radio, Channel 159, the Catholic Channel and at 11pm on XM Satellite, Channel 117.

Next Sunday's theme (December 27) is **"New Beginnings"**



Fratelli Tutti: Dialogue and Friendship in Society More from Pope Francis:

The Joy of Acknowledging Others

218. A culture of encounter calls for the ability to recognize other people's right to be themselves and to be different. This recognition, as it becomes culture, makes possible the creation of a social covenant. Without out it, subtle ways can be found to make others insignificant, irrelevant, of no value to society.

219. A realistic and inclusive social covenant must also be a "cultural covenant," one that respects and acknowledges the different worldviews, cultures, and lifestyles that co-exist in society.

221. Such a covenant also demands the realization that some things may have to be renounced for the common good. No one can possess the whole truth or satisfy his or her every desire, since that would lead to nullifying others by denying their rights.

A false notion of tolerance has to give way to a dialogic realism on the part of men and women who remain faithful to their own principles while recognizing that others have the right to do likewise. *This is the genuine acknowledgment of the other that is possible by love alone.* We have to stand in the place of others, if we are to discover what is genuine in their motivations and concerns.

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