



RE-IMAGINE CHURCH | ENCOUNTER JESUS | LIVE WITH PURPOSE



JANUARY 17, 2021

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Welcome!

Sacred Heart Parish is a welcoming and accepting Catholic community that fosters a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and lives that faith through love and service.

Jesus Calling

To what in current events is Jesus calling your attention?



OF MANY THINGS...

I want to thank all of you who have taken time to respond to my homily from last weekend on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. It is the largest response to any homily I have given here in almost 18 years. The transcript of this homily is included in this bulletin. *A video version* of the homily from last week's Mass posted on the front page of our parish website for your reference.

Preaching about current events and issues in public life, especially events and issues that have or seem to have political connections, is not easy. Our Catholic faith does not align with the tenants of any particular political party. Neither the Republican nor Democratic Party perfectly support our Catholic teaching. However, I believe strongly that our Catholic faith is very much connected with our daily lives and speaks to the concerns and situations we face in daily life. Our religious faith is supposed to shape the way we live.

We do not, cannot and will not tell people how to vote or which candidate or political party to support on any particular issue. However, I strongly believe that our religious faith is not merely about praying and being a nice person. I believe that our religious faith, if it is what Jesus intended it to be, has something important to contribute to our lives. I believe our religious faith should have a place in the moral decision-making process we use about public issues. I believe that our religious faith should help us as we make decisions in voting in our local and national elections. For that reason, I do not hesitate to address such concerns and issues from the perspective of our Catholic faith when I preach.

-Continue to next page

OF MANY THINGS... -Continued

Some people object to addressing controversial public issues in homilies at Mass. However, if there is a moral dimension to the particular issue I believe we not only can, but must speak about it as a way to help people form their consciences in making such choices. ***I believe that every political issue was a moral issue before it was a political issue.*** A careful reading of the Gospels will illustrate that Jesus spoke out about moral issues all the time, for example, the value of human life, the dignity of all people, the rights and responsibilities of living in society, care for the poor, violence, truth, etc.

We regularly speak about the fact that many people have drifted away from the active practice of our Catholic faith, indeed of all religious faiths. I believe that one of the reasons that they drift away is a sense they get that religious faith has nothing to do with real life and real life issues. I flippantly say that I would put a "For Sale" sign on our front lawn personally if I ever concluded that our Catholic faith had no real meaning for people and for their lives and well-being. Notice that there is no such sign on our lawn.

I believe that our Catholic faith, as a popular commercial says, "brings good things to life". It brings good things to life such as meaning, purpose, habits that enrich our lives, hope, inspiration and guidance for how to live human life fully and deeply as God intends, not to mention the ways that will lead us to eternal life. I believe it would be pastoral malpractice not to address the important issues of our day and to help people form their consciences about how to act in regards to those issues and situations.

These are days of great stress and turmoil in our nation and in our world. In many ways, the current pandemic has exacerbated the personal and national struggles we face. Our Catholic faith offers us the assurance of God's faithful presence and guidance for how to live the life that God has given us. God's faithful presence and guidance offers us "**HOPE**" (There is that word again!). May we allow our Catholic faith to be all that it can be for us as individuals and as a nation. Let us be joined in prayer and solidarity with one another, working to bring about the reign of God (God's way) in our own lives, in our nation and in our world.

-Father Joe

Feast of Baptism of the Lord – Homily of January 10, 2021

Today's feast of the Baptism of the Lord concludes the Christmas season in the Church. It celebrates another dimension of the fact that Jesus, who is really God (which is to say divine), was also human just like you and me except that he never sinned. Like you and me, Jesus "grew in wisdom, age and grace", as the Scriptures tell us. Jesus grew up through various experiences that helped him discover and understand who he was and who God is. That is why I like to refer to his baptism as his "first religious experience". Jesus hears, "This is my beloved son..." Moreover, in that, he discovered that he belongs to God in a way that he belongs to no one else. That is what Baptism is meant to initiate in us: an awareness that we belong to God in a way we belong to no one else. However, Baptism for us, as it was for Jesus, is only a beginning. There is no value in just "getting baptized," "getting the sacrament" and thinking I have done my duty. Sacraments are "verbs not nouns," as someone once said. There is a dynamism to them or else they are just superstition.

Jesus' baptism is noted right at the beginning of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. St. John's Gospel alludes to it, but that Gospel is more concerned with the symbolism and meaning of Jesus life and ministry than about the details of it as the other three Gospels are. The account of Jesus' baptism is always followed immediately in Matthew, Mark and Luke by his temptation in the desert. In some sense how Jesus responds to the spirit of evil indicates whether or not his baptism "took". It is the same for us. Jesus' baptism and temptation sets him on a path, a certain way of living and ministering. Baptism propels Jesus into ministry. He never stops until he dies on the cross. Check that out in Matthew's, Mark's or Luke's Gospel accounts.

Baptism is meant to work that way for each of us as well. Many times, we might say that living a loving, faithful and virtuous life was easy for Jesus because he is God. However, remember what this season is really all about: Jesus was like us ***in all ways but sin***. I think that is why we Catholics make such a big deal about saints. Saints are human persons completely like us and they lived good holy lives. They show us that the commands of God and the example of Jesus are not the impossible dream of Don Quixote. They are possible. Other human persons just like us have lived that way of life faithfully. We have no excuse not to do the same.

On Friday, I was invited to take part in a ceremony at the Immaculate Conception Basilica in Waterbury at which the Navy Cross, the Navy's second highest honor for those who have shown extraordinary heroism, was bestowed posthumously on Father Thomas Conway by the Secretary of the Navy. Father Conway was a priest who was born and raised in Waterbury and who served as a chaplain on the USS Indianapolis during WWII. He was honored for his extraordinary heroism (we would say for extraordinarily faithful discipleship of Jesus). On July 30, 1945, the Indianapolis was on its way to rejoin its fleet in the Philippines when it was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine forcing Father Conway

and hundreds of his shipmates into the open ocean in the dead of night. Covered with oil from their stricken ship, without rafts or provisions, they began a desperate struggle to survive. Completely disregarding his own well-being, Father Conway continually swam between clusters of adrift sailors – many of whom were severely injured, delirious or dying – to provide them with comfort and encouragement, pray with them, hear their confessions and administer the Anointing of the Sick. After 3 days of tireless exertion to aid his shipmates, 38-year-old Father Conway died not of drowning but of exhaustion and his body was committed to the deep. His efforts were credited as a major reason why 67 of his shipmates were ultimately rescued.

The ceremony at the Immaculate was very moving, but I was struck and inspired by Father Conway's story and by the way he lived out both his baptismal and his priestly commitment. His baptism was no superstition. He was human like any of us and he lived his baptismal commitment perhaps not perfectly, but faithfully. The fact that he was baptized at the Immaculate Conception Basilica in Waterbury, just as I was, was not wasted on me either as I reflected. Like all of the sacraments of our faith, Baptism is a verb not a noun. If it works, it affects us for the rest of our lives. If we are committed to letting our baptism work in us, it can nourish our faith, lead us to live faithful, holy and virtuous lives as it appears to have done for Father Conway.

However throughout the ceremony, fresh in my mind and heart, as I suspect it may also have been in yours, was also the memory of the attack on the Capitol in Washington DC two days earlier and its attempt to prevent the Congress from fulfilling one of its constitutionally-mandated duties. It offended all patriotic Americans and all faithful believers. I was saddened to see the symbols of our democracy maligned by our fellow citizens. But I was also angered and outraged that this national disgrace was incited by our president. It is not that we were unaware of the toxic tone that has been growing in our nation, particularly in our political life but also in our daily lives in recent years. But this particular act was so violent and so vulgar that it immediately grabbed the attention of our nation like 9/11 and Sandy Hook had done before it.

One of the most dramatic icons of that night seared into my consciousness as I watched the events unfold was a video showing the crowds of domestic terrorists climbing up the stairs of the Capitol building. In that crowd, almost side-by-side, I noticed two particular banners being carried by two different participants. One banner had the name of our president on it and the other had the saying "Jesus Saves" on it. It was a clear example of the way religious symbols have been used for political gain in recent years. Christian faith, the faith of baptized believers in Jesus and the God whom Jesus reveals, has nothing to do with flying the banner of Jesus while destroying property, causing chaos, fear and hurt, and violently demeaning and endangering the lives of other people. What was demonstrated there on Wednesday was the naked reality of division, distrust, dishonesty, vulgarity, and misplaced

fealty. In other words, what was blatantly obvious was what St. Ignatius Loyola called, "the spirit of sin and darkness." It was evil, writ large.

Sincere, faithful baptized Christians, indeed all sincere believers of all religious faiths, like Father Conway, bear the flag of authentic religious faith by working for peace, justice, mutual respect, unity, compassion, care for the poor, the marginalized and the needy. In doing so they promote what we emblazoned in luminaria on our front lawn on New Year's Eve: "HOPE."

It has been commonly said during these months of the pandemic that we could not wait to put the year 2020 behind us and welcome 2021. Well, 2021 only took 6 days to challenge our best resolutions and our greatest hopes. However, because of what we believe through Jesus, we must begin again. I offer some challenging, yet I believe much needed suggestions for how we might do that:

- Always treat others with kindness and respect. Name calling, harsh and vulgar insults, gossip and any purposefully demeaning speech is totally out of place in civil society and on the tongues of those who claim to believe in Jesus.
- Always speak the truth. When people begin to say things that are not true and that they know are not true, they are either lying or suffering from mental illness.
- Confront your own prejudices and your own biases. You have them; I have them. We cannot change the big picture of our government or our American culture without addressing our own life patterns. A friend of mine said that when he had been working in the corporate world their slogan was "Think globally; troubleshoot locally." Good advice!
- Seek common ground even with those with whom you disagree. People can be respectful and even be good friends while at the same time disagreeing with another about something. They may have to be more disciplined in their conversations if they really value their friendship, but they can do it.
- Pray for one another that we all might become better people. It is hard to really hate someone when you pray for them.

As I mentioned, we spelled out the word "HOPE" in large letters in luminaria on our lawn on New Year's Eve. We had done the same, right after the Sandy Hook murders several years ago. It expresses our deeply held belief that we can be better people, a better community of believers and a better nation, more faithful to the principles upon which we were founded: That all people have been created equal and have been endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

One of the most frequent reactions to the events of last Wednesday quoted in the media has been, "This is not who we are." I suggest that it is up to us now to prove that. Our baptism as Catholics and our faithful citizenship as Americans demand nothing less.



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203-217-0025



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Lynn Tidgwell - 203-217-0025



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*The Marian Votive Candle
burns in loving memory of
Gordon and Veronica Fry
by their families*

Sacred Heart Parish Center is meant to be a gathering place. We offer guidelines for any parish committee or ministry meetings to be held at Church:

- Register all meetings with Mary Korsu in Parish Office
- Masks are to be worn at all times with appropriate social distancing observed
- Assign a designated chairperson who will schedule meeting, assure building is open and that lights are out when meeting is done. Please check with Mary Korsu.
- For each meeting, a log must be kept of attendees and their phone numbers and submitted to Parish Office.
- During this Pandemic, parish meetings on Zoom, at a member's house for small groups or outside when the weather permits is always preferred.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Mary Frances	Ellen Longenecker	Barbara Ditter
Patty Richards	Nancy Kabasakalian	Lynn Gannon
J.C. Corr	Sue Adams	Colleen Anne
Bob Spiewak	Diane Turano	Hildegard Bayer
Carole Bogardus	Pat Conte	Rina Conte
Teresa Paretto	Betty Walsh	William Yoncher
Dylan Stolz	Bob Byrne	Phyllis Phelan
Declan Georgette	Ethna McGuinness	Yumi Massi
Juergen Matzen	Carol Jameson	Keith Rafferty
Princeton Thrower	Jim Kowalski	Jim McCarthy
Steve Brown	Teresa Helbock	Terri McCarthy



SOCIAL OUTREACH

Serving the Needs of the Less Fortunate

The COVID-19 pandemic has restricted our ability to meet the needs of our less fortunate neighbors. Please contact **Bob Byrne** for general inquiries: 203-267-7778 or rbyrne519@gmail.com.



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Cindi Putney
7 Talmadge Hill Road,
Prospect, CT 06712



**St. Vincent DePaul
Mission of Waterbury:**
34 Willow Street, P.O. Box 1612
Waterbury, CT 06721



Southbury Food Bank:
P.O. Box 68, Southbury, CT 06488
Or online:
southburyfoodbank.org

Sandwich Makers:

Next Sandwich Drop off: Jan 19th & Feb 7th - 7:30 - 4:30 PM

The sandwich ministry collected 74 loaves of sandwiches on December 29! We also received a cart full of baked goods and many types of snacks. We must strongly request that if you are having any signs of illness; sore throat, cough, headache, fever or are not feeling well in any way, please do not make sandwiches. We need to take every precaution to ensure everyone involved in the process is protected so we can continue to provide this valuable service. Please take necessary steps to make and deliver the sandwiches with prevention guidelines in mind. As an alternative to making sandwiches, the shelter is in need of non-perishable foods like snack bars and pop tarts. If you need a copy of the 20-21 Sandwich Schedule or if you have any questions, please contact, Claire Barlow, at 203-262-0599 or email cb06488@gmail.com.

Catholic High School Collection 2021 The Catholic High School Collection, occurring in all parishes of the Archdiocese on the weekend of January 23rd and 24th, supports the outstanding education offered at our Catholic Secondary Schools by providing funds for tuition assistance, technology enhancements, curricular improvements, and marketing, all of which are so critical during this ongoing pandemic. Please consider investing in the exceptional academics, solid faith formation and spirit of service at our high schools by making a gift to this year's Catholic High School Collection next weekend.

'Racial Justice' United Church of Christ, Southbury, is hosting a Zoom webinar "Where Do We Stand? Racial Justice in Southbury," on Sunday, January 17th, from 12pm to 1pm. Speakers Dr. Erin Birden, teacher in residence for Diversity and Cultural Competency for Region 15, and Rabbi Eric Polokoff, spiritual leader, B'Nai Israel in Southbury, will talk about the state of racial justice in Southbury, past and present, and efforts to spread racial justice for a better future. The Rev. Susan Murtha will introduce the panel and Robert Hesketh will facilitate the discussion.

The meeting access link is <https://uccsouthbury.zoom.us/j/95816805642> or sign into Zoom and use Meeting ID: 958 1680 5642, and/or listen by phone by dialing 877-853-5247 or 888-788-0099 toll free. No prior registration is required.

Attendees are welcome to submit questions via the Zoom chat feature, time permitting.

**The parish offices will be CLOSED on Monday, January 18th
for the Martin Luther King holiday.**

NOTE: If Region 15 has a delayed opening or is cancelled due to the weather, there will be no 8:30 AM Mass.

A REMINDER! The regular deadline for all bulletin articles is Monday 12 PM. Please send all articles to bulletin@shcsby.org.

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LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

ONSITE:

Saturday Vigil- 5 PM
Sunday- 9 AM and 11 AM
Tues, Wed, Thurs- 8:30 AM

ONLINE:

Sunday- 7:30 AM*, 9 AM, 11AM
*If you miss these live Masses, you can always watch them on-demand 24/7. See below. *7:30 AM is broadcast only.*

Website

www.sacredheartchurch.info
(bottom of homepage)

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Youtube

www.youtube.com/c/
SacredHeartSouthbury

Heritage Village Channel 14

Broadcasts Mass:
Monday-Friday, 8am and 1pm

Our online Platforms:

shcsouthbury.online.church:

An innovative space where our community can gather and experience Mass online in real time! We strongly encourage you to gather together on Sundays on the **shcsouthbury.online.church** platform at 7:30am, 9am or 11am. Chat with others from our community, offer your prayer intentions during the Prayer of the Faithful and be uniquely connected in this time when it is not easy to be together physically. If you can't be at Mass onsite- this is the place to be!

Facebook: The 7:30am Sunday Mass is broadcast only and LIVE on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SacredHeartChurchSBYCT

It will always be available on-demand in the timeline. Please *like* and *share* our page with friends and family both near and far. Chat, offer intentions, comment and pray online together.

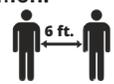
www.sacredheartchurch.info: Scroll to the bottom of our home page and you will find the video of the 7:30am Mass which is available for viewing starting at 10:30am on Sunday and all week.

YouTube: Our Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/SacredHeartSouthbury> has a library of our previous broadcasts of Masses and reflections.

We are NOW streaming on ROKU, Amazon Fire & Apple TV through the *Boxcast App!*

ONSITE ATTENDANCE AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

- Watch the 4-minute safety video on website, or request full written procedures from parish office
- Arrive 15 minutes prior to Mass
- Wear face mask when you exit vehicle and in Mass at all times
- Social distancing of 6 feet-look for helpful markers
- No singing, touching other people, or gathering in the building or parking lots.
- Bring small bottle of hand sanitizer with you to use prior to Communion.
- Receive Holy Communion from the minister with your mask on, walk to the X 6-feet away, remove mask, consume the Body of Christ, put on Mask, return to seat.
- Exit through doors as directed.



See the Archdiocese notice on the doors as you enter. Please remember that Archbishop Blair has dispensed the Sunday obligation. Stay safe and healthy- stay home if you have any concerns.

Reserve your seat at: <https://sacredheartchurch.info/mass-reservations/> or call the parish office at 203-264-5071. *Reservations required.*

All Masses will be limited to 100 people due to state regulation. Seating may be in the overflow areas of the Parish Hall or Chapel.

Please arrive early or on-time as your seat may be given away to those waiting on standby.

If you come without a reservation you will be asked to record your name, stand to the side and a seat will be offered if available.

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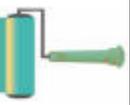
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