

September 5, 2021



# St. Monica

Catholic Church



13623 Rockside Road  
Garfield Heights, Ohio  
Parish Office:  
(216) 662-8685  
Fax: (216) 662-1245  
website: [saintmonicachurch.net](http://saintmonicachurch.net)  
St. Benedict: (216) 662-9380  
Early Learning Center  
(216) 475-3633  
OCFCU (216) 663-6800

## PARISH OFFICE HOURS

The Parish Office is open  
8:00am—4:00 pm. Mon.,  
Tues. & Thurs & 8:00  
am— Noon on Wed. & Fri.

MASSES: 7 days a week  
Saturday: 4:00 p.m.  
Sunday: 9:00 a.m.  
and 10:45 a.m.  
Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m

Bulletin Announcements due to  
[sshepka@saintmonicachurch.net](mailto:sshepka@saintmonicachurch.net)  
by NOON on Friday

## PARISH CLERGY

Rev. Thomas A. Haren, **Pastor**  
Rev. Theodore Marszal,  
**Senior Parochial Vicar**  
Rev. Thomas G. Montavon,  
**Retired, in Residence**  
Stan Drozell, **Deacon**

## PASTORAL STAFF

Sister Helene Skrzyniarz  
SSJ-TOSF,  
**Parish Catechetical Leader**  
[srhelene@saintmonicachurch.net](mailto:srhelene@saintmonicachurch.net)  
Bob Soeder, **Director of  
Liturgy and Music**  
Stan Jakosh, **Business Mgr**  
Susan Shepka, **Office Mgr**  
  
Joseph Ungarsky  
**Pastoral Council Chairman**  
Bill Simon  
**Finance Council Chairman**

**PARISH MISSION STATEMENT:** We, the parish of St. Monica, work to create a Christlike family, welcoming all people where one encounters a loving God, by serving the spiritual, educational and social needs of the community.

**BAPTISM:** Please make arrangements in advance. Baptisms are performed on Sundays, immediately following the 10:45 a.m. Mass. Pre-Baptismal instruction is required for parents. Please call the Parish Office for time of next scheduled class.

**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA):** Adults and school-age children seeking full membership in the Catholic Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist can make an appt. to continue their conversion process by calling the Parish Office.

**RECONCILIATION:** Opportunities to celebrate God's forgiveness in one's life are available on Saturday afternoons from 3:15-3:45 p.m. Individual appointments with a Priest can be arranged.

**MATRIMONY:** The Diocese of Cleveland requires a 6-month preparation period for marriage. Call the Parish Office to set your wedding date and plan your celebration.

**CONFIRMATION:** Any adult or high school student needing Confirmation, please call the Parish Office to schedule preparation.

**ANOINTING OF THE SICK:** Celebrated upon request. Call the Parish Office to make arrangements with one of our Priests.

**NEW PARISHIONERS:** Please call the Parish Office to register.

**ST. BENEDICT CATHOLIC SCHOOL:** Provides Catholic education for students K-8. School hrs.: 8:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. *Before & After Care* available. Mrs. Lisa Oriti, *School Principal*

**EUCCHARIST FOR THE HOMEBOUND:** Parish Team and Staff Members visit the homebound on a monthly basis. If you or someone you know is homebound and would like to receive communion, call the Parish Office.



**LITURGY SCHEDULE**  
Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.

**Sunday, September 5**

*Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

9:00 Stanley & Aggie Galica

10:45 People of the Parish

**Monday, September 6**

*Weekday*

8:00 Mary Lou Folton

**Tuesday, September 7**

*Weekday*

8:00 Living & Deceased members of the Nancy Potter Family

**Wednesday, September 8**

*The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

8:00 Joseph Deliberato

**Thursday, September 9**

*USA: Saint Peter Claver, Priest*

8:00 Frank Bednarchik

**Friday, September 10**

*Weekday*

8:00 Living & deceased members of Father Montavon's Family & Fr. Montavon

**Saturday, September 11**

*Weekday*

3:15 Confessions

4:00 Mary Kupiecki

**Sunday, September 12**

9:00 Living & deceased members of the Robert Foster Family

10:45 People of the Parish

**Please keep in your prayers the following members of our Parish Community:**



Larry Piechowiak, Toni Oden, Steve Carlson, Joseph & Veronica Mayak, Randy Peck, Robyn Buckley, Anthony Lupica, Marge Netzbund, John Spadaro, Lisa and Gaylene Bielawski, Joanne Reddinger, Joan Kaczmarczyk, Algaheim Babies, Carol & Gerald DeLooze, Harrison Justin Shepherd. *The names will remain in*

*the bulletin for two weeks. Please call the parish office if your name or a loved one's name needs to be added to the list. If you have a special intention you would like remembered in prayer, please call Lillian Neptune (216) 662-5464.*



Our sincere sympathy and prayers are extended to the family and friends of **Catherine Armeni** who was buried this past week. May she rest in peace.

# Pastoral Scene

## Hidden Figures

No, this Pastoral Scene is *not* about the 2016 award winning movie reflected in its title. Nevertheless, it does embody much of the same message of that film overall. Let me explain.

When I was catechizing a couple in RCIA, we met every Sunday because their work schedules were so chaotic. Being an "I prefer Sunday Mass" attendee, I found a small parish, not too far from my home, that celebrated a 7:30 am Mass on Sundays and joined a rather small congregation to celebrate weekly. As is common in many parishes, we sat in our favorite pews, and even though we did not know each other's names, still joined in exchanging a sign of peace.

About a month or so ago, I resumed my practice of attendance at the 7:30 Mass with many of the same individuals who were there before Covid. However, as I left the church, one of the women said, "You are new here." to which I replied, "Not really; I have been coming here for almost six years." "Well," she responded, "I never noticed you." And in my mind, I thought, 'I must be a hidden figure!' But that thought gave me great pause – and the realization that so many of you were/are the hidden figures and definitely 'invisible'.

Saint Monica Parish has had a cadre of 'hidden figures' during the eighteen months that Covid was especially virulent in our areas. Throughout the shutdown, during the opening of limited Mass attendance, and in the preventative measures taken to keep everyone safe as we continued, these 'hidden figures' were there for everyone of us!

They were our Priests, Musicians, and Lectors. They were the Parish Office Staff and Secretaries. They were our Eucharistic Ministers and Mass Coordinators who maintained masked closeness despite the risks. They were the Ushers who became 'human shelves' for the bulletins parishioners carried home.

They were the dedicated, 'masked and gloved cleaning and sanitizing teams', who without any hesitation picked up spray bottle and drying cloth to ensure a safe environment not only on Sundays (where you might see them) but also after weekday Masses and Funeral services. If a human hand or body touched it, the hands that sprayed, wiped, and sanitized removed any evidence!

They were the Monday morning picker-uppers, those who swept, dusted, set up sanitizing stations, and readied the church during the week. They were the ones who cleaned the church when the shutdown began and did the same before it reopened. They were the hidden figures whose names we do not know nor whose faces we may recognize now that we are mask less. They are the ones we delayed in thanking for their selfless service.

PLEASE take some time this week to thank the LORD for the **gift of hidden figures** not only here at Saint Monica but also in your own lives. Truly, they were and are God's gift, and the wind beneath our wings!  
Sr. Helene



The Parish Office will be closed on **Monday, September 6** for Labor Day. We will reopen at 8:00 am on Tuesday morning.

**The Significance of the Scroll in Revelation**

The most mysterious symbol in *Revelation* is a papyrus roll in God's right hand that is sealed with seven seals, and can only be opened by one 'worthy' of the task. *Revelation* itself does not explain the following information that makes this action understandable because it would have been common knowledge to the Early Christians as well as the Greeks and Jews. However, since we are not first-century people, let me tell you the story of the Redemption Scroll.

The opening of the Redemption Scroll in *Revelation* is based on an Old Testament practice of writing terms for any legal transaction outlined in Leviticus 25. It was based on the Jubilee Year requirements, and the common belief that all the land was God's and could not be sold irrevocably. It was 'for the use' of the owner, but not forever. This process worked on the same principle as a mortgage, a loan, or even the selling of an object in a pawn shop that would later be redeemed.

"The Law of Redemption" was memorialized on a scroll and described what was being agreed to, the name of the legal owner or his kinsman who could redeem the object described on the scroll, and the price paid. Then the scroll was sealed with seven seals, and placed in a safe place or in the Temple until the property could be "redeemed" (usually bought back). At the time of 'redemption' the scroll was brought out to the owner or his kinsman, who opened the scroll and claimed the property.

In *Revelation*, the "owner" of the Redemption Scroll is Jesus, and the only one 'worthy' to break the seals because he had already paid the price for the redemption of all of us. As each seal is cut, one-by-one the seven disasters are released. The destruction that happens in each Woe is a symbolic description of what is occurring, rather than a literal description of what will occur when the prayers of the martyrs for vindication are answered. To the Early Christians, each Woe reflected of both Old Testament prophecies, and the "end of the world" descriptions found in the Gospels of Matthew (24), Mark (13), and Luke (21) read at the end of the long Ordinary Time period right before the beginning of Advent.

In Chapter 10, John is given a 'little scroll' that may be somewhat related to the larger scroll just opened. The 'divine figure' commands him to eat it, and he does. John calls it 'sweet' as he consumes it and 'bitter' after it is consumed. The Word of the Lord is always 'sweet', but the destruction John 'saw' in the scroll's message was bitter.

*Revelation* now looks to the future. This last segment will explain the New Jerusalem – the New Heaven and the New Earth originally proposed in Genesis.

Looking forward to sharing the New Jerusalem and all it presents with you!

Sister Helene

**Join us every Thursday at 6:00 pm in Church as we pray the Rosary. All are invited.**



**Religion Question of the Week**

What is meant by a "Doctrine of the Church".  
(Answer on page 4)

**Did You Know?**

Did you know that in 1953 the \$1,000 monthly raffle was begun by the Holy Name Society?

**One Liner**

"In a moment of decision the best thing to do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing". (Theodore Roosevelt)

**Tuition Aid and Other Special Help**

The "Good Samaritan Fund" was established to help parishioners who need help with their Catholic School tuition, and for parishioners who need special help in other financial areas. Please contact the parish office if your family is in need of such aid.



**Thank you to everyone who supported our fund raiser by purchasing raffle tickets (all the different kinds!), everyone who came out to the event, those who donated raffle baskets and main raffle items, and for all of our sponsors. Special thanks to Bob Soeder, Sue Shepka & Jim Joyce who organized this event; to MaryAnn Wieliczko for all her hard work, persistence and energy in getting us most of the donations for the raffle baskets; to our parish staff who helped behind the scenes; to all who volunteered to work at the picnic; to all who helped with the "set up" and "clean up"; and to all who made the outdoor Mass so beautiful.**

**The final results of the Homecoming Picnic and Raffle will be printed in the bulletin as soon as we can. Again, what a wonderful Parish we have at St. Monica Church.**

Fr. Thomas Haren

 **ActivitiesCALENDAR**

**MONDAY, September 6 (Parish Office Closed)**

**TUESDAY, September 7**

- 2:00 p.m. After School Care ©
- 3:00 p.m. Senior Meeting (p)
- 4:00 p.m. Athletic Practice (g)
- 6:00 p.m. HN Installation Dinner (p)
- 6:30 p.m. Guild Board Mtg (F)

**WEDNESDAY, September 8**

- 2:30 p.m. After School Care ©
- 4:00 p.m. Athletic Practice (g)
- 4:00 p.m. G.A. (p)

**THURSDAY, September 9**

- 2:30 p.m. After School Care (c)
- 4:00 p.m. Athletic Practice (g)
- 4:15 p.m. Walking Group (J)
- 6:00 p.m. Rosary (+)

**FRIDAY, September 10**

- 2:30 p.m. After School Care (c)
- 6:00 p.m. PTU Outdoor Movie Night (c/g/parking lot)

**SATURDAY, September 11**

- 8:30 a.m. Men of the Vine (ocu1&2)
- 9:00 a.m. Sandwich Saturday (J)
- 2:00 p.m. Baptist Bible Study (p)

**SUNDAY, September 12**

- 9:00 a.m. Coffee & Donuts (c)
- 2:30 p.m. Divine Mercy (+)
- 7:00 p.m. A.A. (sci&2)

**COFFEE & DONUT SOCIAL**

**Our Sunday Coffee and Donut Social returns next Sunday, September 12 after the 9:00 am Mass only. Hosting will be the Parish Office.**



**STEWARDSHIP**

**August 29, 2021**

Regular Offertory.....	\$ 4,642.00
St. Monica Fund.....	\$ 685.00
Misc. Envelopes.....	\$ 343.00

*Please continue to mail in your donations, donate online or drop off at the office. You can also drop your donation in the baskets in church. Thank you for your continued support.*

**Answer to This Week's Religion Question**

What is meant by the term "a doctrine of the Church"?

**Answer:**

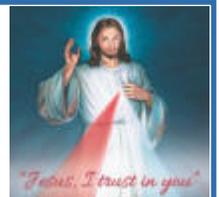
a Doctrine of the Church is a teaching that must be believed by all the faithful of the Church. An example of this is the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

**Sandwich Saturday**

Sandwich Saturday returns next Saturday, **September 11**, beginning at **9:00 am** in the lower level of the Parish Office. We will be preparing 300 sandwiches this month. Questions, call the Parish Office, 216-662-8685. Thank you for your continued support.



There will be a Divine Mercy Holy Hour this **Sunday, September 12 at 2:30 pm** in Saint Monica Church. All are welcome!



**\$1,000 Holy Name Monthly Raffle Winners-August 29**

- \$500.00 #262 Burt Leone**  
Seller: Frank Leone  
Captain: Jim Joyce
- \$500.00 #471 Ray Golembczyk**  
Seller: Barb Bykiewicz  
Captain: Will Skladany
- 581 tickets were sold**

**St. Benedict Catholic School Reopens**

Congratulations to Mrs. Lisa Oriti and the School Staff on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Benedict Catholic School. Over 12 years ago the Churches of St. Martin of Tours and St. Monica began the process of establishing a new school that would be supported by both of our parishes. With the direction of Bishop Lennon and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Margaret Lyons, and the assistance of the Ursuline Community, and a professional consulting firm, the groundwork for St. Benedict's was put together. This process was followed by much consultation with the school families of both parishes, and with the finance board of both parishes. The doors of the new school opened on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

This year St. Benedict Catholic School will share two campuses. Grades 1 – 8 will be located on the St. Monica Campus. The St. Martin of Tours Campus presently hosts the Early Learning Center. This entity consists of two Kindergarten classrooms, two Preschool classrooms for children ages three and four, and a Day Care unit for children from the ages of six weeks to eighteen months. At this time there will be around one hundred students at the St. Martin of Tours Campus, and around three hundred and thirty students at the St. Monica Campus.

We would like to thank all of our parishioners, both at St. Monica Church, and at St. Martin of Tours Church, for making St. Benedict's a possibility in our community. Most of all we would like to thank Almighty God for making this a reality. Congratulations to all who helped on this vital project to ensure the presence of a Catholic School in our neighborhood.

Fr. Thomas Haren

**St. Benedict Daycare** is continuing to grow by leaps and bounds! The daycare is hiring part time assistants, 20-25 hours per week to assist with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. St. Benedict Daycare is open year round Monday through Friday. Flexible hours are available. Childcare experience preferred. Candidates will need to be Virtus trained and have an FBI/BCI background check completed. Interested candidates please submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to St. Benedict school principal, Mrs. Lisa Oriti at [loriti@stbenedictohio.com](mailto:loriti@stbenedictohio.com).



**Strudel Sale Coming Soon!**

The Catholic War Veterans Auxiliary, Post 1812 will have a strudel sale on **Saturday & Sunday, September 11 & 12**, after all the Masses in the Gathering area of the Church. Lydia's strudel is the best in town, and only costs \$8.50 per strudel. Cherry, Apple & Cheese will be available.

Please support our Veterans Auxiliary who help so many.

**Garfield Heights Knights of Columbus  
Wednesday Night Dinners: August**

**Reservations by Sunday, September 5....8PM**  
Wednesday, September 8– Stuffed Cabbage  
\$10.00 per dinner

Prepared by Lori's Custom Catering ---  
phone 216-662-2277 --- MAILBOX #3

**Dinner Consists of:**  
1 Stuffed Cabbage, Mashed Potatoes,  
Vegetable, Roll and Butter

**EVERYTHING IS PACKAGED - PRE-ORDER ONLY**  
Curbside Pickup– Ready to heat -

**NO BAKERY-SERVING TIME 4-6 PM**  
Pickup at 10806 Granger Road—CLUB 4130  
*Please leave your complete name, phone number and number of dinners you will be picking up. Please no changes day of. Thank you for your continued patronage. If someone else is picking up - leave their name also.*

**EWTN**

Tune in to brand new episodes of The Catholic View for Women on EWTN beginning this Sunday, September 5. Each show airs at 11:30 pm ET Sundays and is rebroadcast at 5:30 am ET on Mondays. Co-hosts include Catholic media personalities Janet Morana, executive director. Priests for Life, EWTN Radio's Teresa Tomeo, host of Catholic Connection and Vanessa Denha Garmo, host of Epiphany on Ave Maria Radio. Topics for the new shows are on timely and important issues facing Catholic Women & men. They include: Raising a Child with Special Needs, Listening to God, Getting Healthy to Serve the Lord and much more. Find all topics and more information for each new episode on [www.TheCatholicViewForWomen.com](http://www.TheCatholicViewForWomen.com)

The next Cleveland Retrouvaille Weekend is scheduled for September 10-12, 2021

This is a Lifeline for Troubled Marriages. Has your marriage become unloving or uncaring – your relationship cold, distant – thinking about a separation or divorce? Are you already separated/divorced but both of you want to try again? Then the Retrouvaille program may help.

RETROUVAILLE, which means rediscovery, is supported by the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, but it is open to couples of all faiths. This program consists of a weekend experience for couples and six follow up sessions. A registration fee of \$150 is required to confirm your reservation. For more information concerning the program, or to register, please call Marce or Liz Gliha at 440.357.6580 or 1.800.470.2230, or go online to [www.helpourmarriage.org](http://www.helpourmarriage.org).

**SENIOR GROUP**

**THE ST. MONICA SENIOR CLUB WILL MEET THIS TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH AT 2:00 IN THE PAVILION. COFFEE, DONUTS, BINGO AND GREAT FELLOWSHIP. SEE YOU THERE!**



From September 22 – October 31, you are invited to join with other Christians for 40 Days for Life – 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. You are also invited to stand and peacefully pray anytime between 7 am to 7 pm during the 40-day vigil in the public right-of-way outside **Preterm** - 12000 Shaker Blvd, Cleveland, 44120 or **Planned Parenthood** - 25350 Rockside Rd, Bedford Hts, 44146, or **Family Planning** – 462 Chardon St, Painesville, 44077. Join us at the Kickoff Rally at St. John Vianney on Monday, September 20 at 7pm. For more information contact John Noall at [clevelandpraysforlife@gmail.com](mailto:clevelandpraysforlife@gmail.com) or 216-245-9744.



**The Philosophy of Relativism – Bad for Catholics**

In recent years the American Culture has been infected with a philosophy called “relativism”. This way of thinking promotes the idea that there is no absolute truth. Every ideological and moral precept is relative to the person who wants to believe it. This is also true on a grander scale. All moral laws are subject to the group of people who want to promulgate it. One of the best modern examples of this philosophy is “political correctness”.

The problem with this philosophy is that it is false. It begins with the premise that there is “no absolute truth” which is then proclaimed as an “absolute truth” to its adherents. To any thinking person this is preposterous.

As Catholics we believe that there is absolute truth in this universe, and it begins with the truth that God exists. This truth leads to the belief that God has revealed Himself to us. One of the sources of this revelation is the Bible. In the Bible we find out that God created us, that God loves us, that our first parents sinned, and through this sin our special relationship with God was broken, that God sent His Son to redeem us and to restore this relationship, that His Son Jesus Christ came into the world, that He taught us what must be done on our part to renew this relationship, and that he restored this relationship by dying on the cross for us, that Jesus set up a Church with all the means of salvation so that all of us could enter into this special relationship with His Father, that the Church through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit would continue to teach what is necessary for our salvation, that if we follow the teachings of His Church we could someday be with God in heaven. This is the absolute truth that God has handed on to the human race.

Relativism denies this absolute truth, and it leads to nowhere. It has no starting point. It has no ending point. It allows everyone to believe whatever they want to believe. Its moral structure has no foundation, nor does it have a goal for its adherents. It allows many radically different sets of morality to coexist at the same time. Law and order become the whims of the society, and they can change at any time.

It must be our priority to take a stand for truth. Relativism has recently led to such falsehoods as the woke movement, critical race theory, the rise of marxism, and political correctness. We already know what the absolute truth is. It begins with our Faith in God. Don't ever be afraid to say that to anyone, because in this case you speak the truth. As Catholics, we speak for Truth.

Fr. Thomas Haren

A message from Bishop Malesic on keeping people safe during the pandemic

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The latest information from federal, state and local public health agencies informs us that the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus is surging in our area, causing increased illness and hospitalizations at levels not seen since the spring. For the safety of all who worship at Catholic parishes throughout the Diocese of Cleveland, I strongly encourage you -- whether vaccinated or not vaccinated -- to wear a face mask while attending Mass indoors. All who want to attend Mass, and who are otherwise vulnerable, should feel safe and welcome inside our sacred spaces. Please use charity and patience with those who do not wish to comply with this strongly stated request. You also might want to consider wearing a face mask for other indoor gatherings, especially for those not yet fully vaccinated. Wearing masks outdoors is not generally required except for activities involving close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.

Those who are ill, have significant health risk factors or care for someone who is immune-compromised or ill, as well as those who have significant fear or anxiety about contracting the coronavirus in a large group of persons are not obliged to attend Mass.

Pope Francis recently offered a message of hope and unity to the world in an effort to continue increasing confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines, specifically in communities disproportionately affected by the virus. "Thanks to God's grace and to the work of many, we now have vaccines to protect us from COVID-19," the pope said. "Getting the vaccines that are authorized by the respective authorities is an act of love. I pray to God that each one of us can make his or her own small gesture of love; no matter how small, love is always grand."

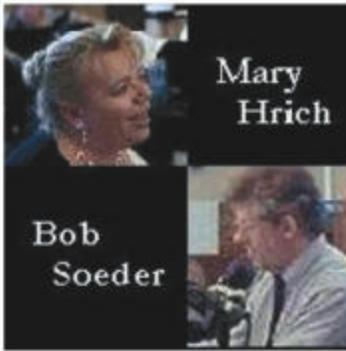
I am fully vaccinated and recommend the same for my family and friends. In consideration of others, I also am wearing a mask during the distribution of holy Communion and I strongly encourage those distributing holy Communion at Mass to wear a mask while distributing as well.

Remember that the situation seems to be ever changing. This request to wear face masks is temporary and will be changed once this current level of increased coronavirus cases is over. Stay connected to information coming from national, state and local health authorities, and stay home and get tested for COVID when you are not feeling well. Following these recommendations will go a long way in helping to keep you and others around you safe.

We are all tired of this pandemic, but we must not forget that we are called to care for the health of others in times of crisis and must continue to protect our healthcare system and medical workers.

May God bless and watch over us in our time of need.

Bishop Edward C. Malesic



# "But I'm Not Dead Yet" - A Funeral Planning Workshop

Presented by Mary Hrich and Bob Soeder

**St. Monica Church**

**13623 Rockside Rd. - Garfield Hts. OH 44125**

**Monday, September 20, 2021 - 2:00pm and 7:00pm**

The death of a loved one can present overwhelming grief, but is often a time of grace as well. When funeral planning is left solely to our loved ones, it can make their loss even more difficult. Many times families and friends are uncertain or even unaware of their loved one's wishes.

We are reassured by our faith that this is not the end – and the funeral planning process can be a turning point in the faith journey of all involved.

This workshop will aid participants to achieve a better understanding and appreciation of the Catholic Funeral Rites and Funeral Liturgy preparation. In addition, we'll touch on topics such as trusts and wills, pre-planned and prepaid funerals, power of attorney, and living wills.

No sign-up or registration is required.

This workshop is presented under the auspices of



Visit us at <http://sustainingthejourney.com>



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Here's how to do it:

1. Go to our Parish Website: <http://saintmonicachurch.net>
2. Locate the Amazon Link located on our Home Page:



*Click on this Link*

3. Clicking on this link will take you to the Amazon Smile page.
4. Click on the button that says: "Start Shopping"
5. Follow the easy instructions and that's it!

**THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!**

**Reading 1 Is 35:4-7a**

Thus says the LORD:  
Say to those whose hearts are frightened:  
Be strong, fear not!  
Here is your God,  
    he comes with vindication;  
    with divine recompense  
    he comes to save you.  
Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,  
    the ears of the deaf be cleared;  
    then will the lame leap like a stag,  
    then the tongue of the mute will sing.  
Streams will burst forth in the desert,  
    and rivers in the steppe.  
The burning sands will become pools,  
    and the thirsty ground, springs of water.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10**

**R:** Praise the Lord, my soul!

The God of Jacob keeps faith forever,  
secures justice for the oppressed,  
gives food to the hungry.  
The LORD sets captives free. **R:**  
The LORD gives sight to the blind;  
the LORD raises up those who were bowed down.  
The LORD loves the just;  
the LORD protects strangers. **R:**  
The fatherless and the widow the LORD sustains,  
but the way of the wicked he thwarts.  
The LORD shall reign forever;  
your God, O Zion, through all generations.  
Alleluia.

**Reading 2 Jas 2:1-5**

My brothers and sisters, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man with gold rings and fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Sit here, please," while you say to the poor one, "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?

Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him?

**Gospel Mk 7:31-37**

Again Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!"— that is, "Be opened!" — And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone.

But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

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