

DECEMBER 25, 2016
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

- MONDAY – Saint Stephen, The First Martyr**
 8:30 Dominic Carton req. by the Mattos Family
- TUESDAY – Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist**
 8:30 Monalda & Oswald Reavey req. by Tom & Pat Bracken
 Marty Jachts req. by his wife, Ann
- WEDNESDAY – The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**
 8:30 Special Intention for Father David McDonnell
- THURSDAY – Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop & Martyr**
 8:30 Seamus Cafferkey
- FRIDAY – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**
 8:30 Seamus Cafferkey
- SATURDAY Saint Sylvester I, Pope**
 8:30 Andrew Latincsics req. by the Maccaro Family
 5:30 Members of the Purgatorial Society

JANUARY 1, 2017

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

- 7:45 People of the Parish
 Joseph Maciejczyk req. by Michael & Stephen Maciejczyk
- 9:00 Members of the Purgatorial Society
- 10:30 John O’Sullivan req. by Peter & Ursula Gorham
- 12:00 Arthur Spellman req. by Tom & Bridget Manning
No 5 PM Mass

PARISH FINANCES

December 18, 2016	\$ 11,273
Retirement Fund for Religious	\$ 5,501



REFLECTION

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

The date: December 1223. The place: Greccio, Italy. The problem: a man living in poverty lamenting that his town’s observance of Christmas had become overshadowed by materialism. Distraught, the man did something extreme. He gathered some friends together, along with some livestock, and re-created the scene at the manger.

It was a moving experience for many people, and over the years, the practice spread around the world. That man was St. Francis of Assisi, and the practice – which every parish around the world has since adopted – was a traditional nativity scene.



About six hundred years later, a priest in France was so full of joy at the sight of a nativity scene that he found his heart melting. “Who can describe the joy of the feast of Christmas?” he asked. Then, moved by the Holy Spirit, he wrote a homily that described three acts of humility that were at the heart of this great feast.

The first act of humility was God’s plan for his Son to take on our human nature and become a man like us in all things but sin. The second act of humility was Jesus coming to us as a helpless baby entrusted to the care of two human beings. The third act of humility was God’s decision to have his Son born into poverty. That priest was St. John Vianney, known as the Curé of Ars and the patron of all priests.

As Christians celebrate Jesus’ birth today, let’s follow the example of these two great saints. Let’s fix our eyes on the baby Jesus and make him the first priority of our day. Let’s carve out some private time with him in prayer before all the celebrations begin. Maybe you can even gather the family and pray together.

And let’s contemplate God’s humility and his magnificent plan for us – a plan that was grounded in what is unquestionably the most dramatic act of humility ever.

O come, let us adore him!”

THE WEEK IN THE PARISH 12/26/16 – 1/1/17

Tues.	9:00 AM Scripture Sharing	Library
Thurs.	6:45 PM BINGO (non-smoking)	McKenna Hall
	7:30 PM Women's Cornerstone	Cassidy Hall
Fri.	8:30 PM AA	Cassidy Hall
Sat.	8:30 PM AA	McKenna Hall
Sun.	HAPPY NEW YEAR	



CATHOLIC ACADEMY OF SUSSEX COUNTY NEWS

A note from the Principal: Thomas J. Costello
Pope John XXIII High School

Pope John XXIII High School's Theatre Group presented their Fall Drama – "Sister Act". It was a great production under the direction of Mrs. Jacki Burt, Theatre Director that included over 60 students. Our students will be performing "Jesus Christ Superstar" as our Spring Musical in February. Further information will be provided.

Pope John's Eight Grade Robotics Team developed a project to benefit the community. The group of five students created a pet rescue kit for firefighters and local veterinary offices. The team won their regional competition and competed for the state title.

Pope John was honored to host Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass at our high school. Over 300 community members attended, and they celebrated with a spirited liturgy with Fr. Alex and also an authentic Mexican dinner.

Pope John's Administration, Faculty and Staff are committed to serving our community and strengthening our Catholic faith. We wish you and your families many blessings this Christmas Season.

Additional information about Pope John XXIII High School is available on our website at www.popejohn.org. We invite you to come visit to meet our students and staff. Please call 973-729-6125 Ext. 255 to schedule a tour.

LITURGY

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (Christmas)

First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

Isaiah rejoices that God is bringing his exiled people home to Jerusalem. He calls out to the people to be glad because God will restore Jerusalem.

Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-6

Paul explains to the Hebrews that although God had spoken through the prophets, people could not always completely understand the message. Now God has spoken to us by sending Jesus, the son, a reflection of God's glory and forgiver of our sins.

Gospel: John 1:1-18

John describes how the Word came into the world in the form of Jesus. All those who accept Jesus become children of God by sharing in Jesus' love. No one has seen God, but through Jesus, God was revealed to us.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

First Reading: Numbers 6:22-27

Second Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel: Luke 2:16-21

KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

Those serving in the military especially: Richard Fox, John Garlasco, Brian McCarthy, Lt. Daniel Faherty, Joseph Venutolo, Cpl. Marc Vero, Sgt. Jeremy Overstreet, Kevin Michael Kiefer, Michael Krapels, Robert Stumpe, USMC, Staff Sgt. Jeremy Curcio, Staff Sgt. Lena Webb, Spc. Samuel Nolan, US Army, Lt. Jamie Curcio, Navy Reserve, 1st Lt. Christopher Tantillo; Cpl. Conor J. Brady, USMC, LCpl. Marc Stanziale, USMC. 1st Lt. Joseph Brunone, US Nat'l Guard, Brandon Adams, USAF. Please continue to pray for all our servicemen and women.

Reverend Brown School

Project Self-Sufficiency challenged Reverend Brown and other local schools to "Stuff the Stocking."

During the month of December, Reverend Brown students and their families supported this wonderful cause by donating toys and gifts for children of all ages. These

donations will be distributed amongst 950 families in our community. As usual, Reverend Brown students and their families accepted the challenge and donated an overwhelming amount of toys and gifts.



For more information about Reverend Brown School, you are invited to our Open House on January 31st.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

DOGMA TEAM/YOUTH GROUP

There will be no meeting on Dec. 26 or Jan 2.
Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all.
See everyone Monday, Jan. 9th, 6:30 to 8:00 PM in the Youth Room.

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will resume on January 17, 2017 at 7:00 PM in Cassidy Hall. We will take "A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother, Mary." All are invited to join us for this Seven Session DVD series, with follow-up discussion and refreshments.

THE BIRTH HAVEN GIVING TREE



The Giving Tree which benefits Birth Haven in Newton, will be up in the vestibule for until the weekend of Dec. 31/Jan.1. Items on their "most needed" wish list include baby laundry detergent, bouncy seats, bottle warmers, Boppy pillows, car seat/stroller combos, breast pumps, and gift cards for gas, Babies 'R' Us, Wal-Mart, and ShopRite. Diapers are not needed at the moment as they just received a large delivery of those, but

monetary donations would be most helpful to cover operating costs such as staff salaries, shelter utilities, groceries, life skills classes and toiletries for clients. For cash donations, please visit their website at www.BirthHaven.org. Thank you so much for your generosity to these expectant mothers in difficult circumstances who have chosen life for their babies.

CHRIST IS HERE!
Cornerstone April 2017

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

OLL LEGACY COOKBOOKS ON SALE

Our Lady of the Lake Legacy Cookbooks have been published and are available for purchase at the parish office. They are \$25 each and make great Christmas gifts. They may also be purchased at the Sparta Book Club. Please support this important fundraiser. Thank you.



THANK YOU!



Thank you to all the members of our Children's and Adult Choirs for the beautiful Christmas Concert on December 11th. We greatly appreciate their hard work at rehearsals and their angelic singing at the concert. Thanks to our friends from Saint Kateri in Sparta for lending their voices and to all the parents for their help and commitment to the children's choir. And finally, thank you to all the parishioners of OLL for their support of our Music Ministry.

WE'VE BEEN ASKED TO ANNOUNCE

Fr. Angelus Croce Retires

After serving the community for many years and being the Chaplain for the Salesian Sisters for over twenty years, Fr. Angelus Croce is retiring to Nazareth Village in Chester. A simple reception will take place at Sacred Heart Center from 1:30-3:00 PM on Sunday, January 8th. Please RSVP by email at croceretirement@gmail.com or leave a message at (201) 396-1102. Please come and wish Fr. Angelus a happy retirement.

Bereavement Support Group

"A Journey Toward Healing" – The Bereavement Ministry of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha R.C. Church invites all who have encountered the loss of a loved one to join our support group for prayerful reflection and sharing. Sessions will be held the first Wednesday every month from January to August 2017 at 7:00 to 8:30 PM at Saint Kateri, 427 Stanhope Rd., Sparta. Please call Laura Entwistle at (973) 726-8978 if you wish to attend.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat

Rachel's Vineyard is a safe place to renew, rebuild, and redeem hearts broken by abortion. Weekend retreats offer a supportive, confidential, and non-judgmental environment where women and men can express, release, and reconcile painful post-abortion emotions and begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing. Rachel's Vineyard Retreat will be held from Friday evening, Jan. 27, 2017 through Sunday afternoon, Jan 29 in the Stirling area. To register and for more information, contact Marie at (973) 377-1004 ext. 425. All calls will be held in strictest confidence.

Our Lady of the Lake Church

294 Sparta Avenue
Sparta, New Jersey 07871
Phone: 973-729-6107 Fax: 973-729-7203

Web Site: www.ourladyofthelake.org

Parish Staff

Rev. David McDonnell	Pastor
Rev. Marcin Bradtke	Associate Pastor
Mr. Anthony (Sonny) Curcio	Deacon
Mr. James McGovern	Deacon
Elizabeth Heldak	Director of Religious Education
Laurie DiCianni	Confirmation Coord.-Youth Minister
Krzysztof Kowalewski	Music Director
Ellen Ormond	Secretary/Bookkeeper
Joanna Mattos	Secretary
Denise Aldana	Social Ministries

Sunday Celebration of the Eucharist

Saturday 5:30 P.M.
Sunday 7:45, 9:00, 10:30 A.M. and 12 Noon
5:00 P.M. (except June, July, and August)

Weekday Masses 8:30 A.M.

Holy Day Masses
8:30, 9:30 A.M. (except August 15th), and 7:00 P.M.

Confessions

Saturday 4:00 to 5:00 and at 6:30 P.M.

Novena

Miraculous Medal Devotions: Saturday 8:30 A.M.

Eucharist Adoration:
Thursday 9:00 to 7:00 P.M.

For information on Baptisms, Marriages, Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Visitation of the Sick, Parish Membership, please call the parish office at (973) 729-6107.

New Parishioners - Welcome!

Won't you please register at the Parish Office
Monday - Friday, 8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Or find our registration form on our webpage
www.ourladyofthelake.org

NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

Saturday December 31	New Year's Eve Regular Morning Mass - 8:30 AM 5:30 PM Vigil Mass
Sunday January 1, 2017	Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God (New Year's Day) 7:45 AM, 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM and 12:00 Noon. There will be NO 5:00 PM Mass



Father David
Father Marcin
and the
Parish Staff
Wish You

A Very Merry and Blessed Christmas!



Bishop Serratelli's Pastoral Letter

Bethlehem: Receiving the Bread of Life

To all the faithful, religious, deacons and priests:
Grace and peace be yours in abundance through knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

1. Giza built pyramids fit for a king... praise in songs and hymns as the little town of Bethlehem.
2. David was born in Bethlehem... Samuel anointed him king in place of Saul.
3. Micah, eight centuries before the coming of Christ, predicted that an honor greater than David's fame would crown this tiny hamlet.
4. The Old Testament names Jerusalem as the city of David forty-five times.
5. The fields surrounding Bethlehem were called Ephrathah.
6. Bethlehem literally means "House of Bread"
7. Jesus identifies himself as the bread of life.
8. Jesus meant for us to take his words literally – not merely symbolically or spiritually.
9. Bethlehem's glory still shines bright upon us.
10. St. Paul tells us we should examine ourselves before receiving Holy Communion
11. ...Eucharist is truly the Bread of Life. It is Jesus, body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, whole and entire.
12. ...We should approach Holy Communion in the state of grace....
13. ...Anyone who has committed a mortal sin needs to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation and be absolved before receiving....
14. We are all sinners...
15. Jesus longs to be our food and drink... "Lord, I am not worthy"

These are just teasers from the bishop's letter. You may find a copy of the letter at the exits of the church, in The Beacon, or online at the diocesan website (<https://rcdop.org>.)