

A Message from Father Alphonsus

My dear Friends,

Thank you, thank you to the more than 70 parishioners who braved the rainy weather on December 10 to attend the parish meeting. As I mentioned, we have many blessings! Our ministries are active, and our parishioners are truly invested in the future of our parish. We also have room for others who wish to volunteer to serve our church. If you are interested in volunteering, please email the parish office for more information.

I am very grateful to Mr. John Fitzgerald and the members of our Finance Council for the guidance and wisdom they have shared with me to secure our financial future. The Diocese of Metuchen has asked that we be transparent with our finances, so a Summary Financial Statement and Report was distributed at the meeting, as well as a comparison of our weekly collections for the period of July-December 2018 and 2019. These reports are posted on our parish website for those who were unable to attend the meeting but wish to be informed. After review, should you have any questions, you may email the parish office and a member of the Finance Council will respond.

I am also grateful to the members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee who have completed an audit of our facilities and will be prepared to report to the Finance Council in January so that we may budget for the immediate and long-term needs of our physical plant. Many dedicated people have given their time and shared their talents to make this happen.

As we move into the new year, and thanks to two parishioners who volunteered, it is my plan to add Youth Ministry to encourage our young people to keep the Lord in their lives through the Church. We also discussed outreach to the members of our community who cannot worship with us because of a language barrier. With your encouragement, I will be reaching out to the pastors of neighboring parishes who serve the Hispanic population as well as the diocesan Office of Hispanic to investigate adding a Spanish Mass. Once this process is completed and with your blessing, I can approach Bishop Checchio about opening the doors of our Church to welcome that community into our parish. I have also been approached by members of the community to consider either changing or alternating our daily Mass schedule from 7 am to 8:30 am, to allow more people to begin their day in the presence of our Lord. Several parishioners raised the question of electronic and alternate giving methods and I have asked our parish staff to explore those options. All of these requests will receive my full consideration.

Finally, I give thanks to the parishioners of Saint John who have shown their confidence in me as their pastor as we work together to make the Kingdom of God present through our words and our deeds. May God bless you and your families as we prepare for His coming this Christmas!

Yours in Christ,

Father Alphonsus

MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, December 15

8:30 am Donna Kugelman
by Terry & Matt Kurzius
10:30 am Robert Maddalena
by Janet & Ed Webber

Monday, December 16

7:00 am Antonio DiMaggio
by the Almetta family

Tuesday, December 17

7:00 am Msgr. Richard Behl
by the Hummel family

Wednesday, December 18

7:00 am Alfonso Randazzo
by Enza DiStefano & family

Thursday, December 19

7:00 am Barbara Ann Giordano
by Arlene Creveling

Friday, December 20

7:00 am Jack Donovan
by Arlene & Kevin Sargent

Saturday, December 21

5:00 pm Deceased members of the D'Ovidio
and Tagliatella families
by Tony & Kathy D'Ovidio

Sunday, December 22

8:30 am Angelo Sereno
by Uncle Sal & Aunt Santa
10:30 am Parishioners of St. John's & Al Geigel
by St. John's Choir

*This week our Sanctuary lamp is lit in memory of
Eddie Marren by
Jeff & Karen Marren.*

Sacrificial Offerings 2019

Sunday, December 8

Regular Collection: \$4,399.00
Immaculate Conception: \$478.00
Religious Retirement Collection: \$910.00

The Parish Office will close at noon on
Monday, December 16, 2019.

Gift Basket Raffle

St. John's Music
Ministry is holding a
raffle for a beautiful
Christmas Gift Basket. Tickets will be
on sale this weekend after all Masses.
Proceeds will help pay for our
instrumental musicians for the
Christmas and Easter liturgies.



Congratulations to Enza DiStefano, the
winner of our Thanksgiving basket!

Christmas Memorials

Reminder that Christmas Memorials are
due no later than December 16.
Memorials may also be submitted by
email to the Parish Office. Please be sure
to include all appropriate information.

Oplatek Wafers

OPLATEK Christmas Wafers are
available in the vestibule of the Church.
The suggested offering is \$3.00. Please
place your donation in the Poor Box.

St. John Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry is in need of the following: dry pasta, rice, cereal, canned tuna and chicken, low/no sugar canned fruit, no/low sodium canned vegetables and soups, tomato sauce and fruit juice. Food donations support our parish food pantry, for our neighbors in need as well as FISH Food Pantry on New Market Road in Piscataway. Thank you for your continuous generosity.

Social Concerns

Do you know a needy person or family? Could one of your neighbors benefit from assistance with food and/or other essentials? Please call the Parish Center, 732-968-2621, in confidence, and we will do whatever we can to help. Please continue to bring men’s toiletries, tooth brushes, and large and medium thongs or slippers for the Ozanam Men’s Shelter. Articles may be left in the vestibule. Thanks for not forgetting the “guys”.

Time, Talent and Treasure



Fostering stewardship is a way of life. Everyone in our parish benefits from the sacrificial gift one makes of time, talent and treasure. With grateful hearts we thank:

Our Catechists and Aides

for their efforts.



Prayers for Our Service Members

Please pray for the following parishioners who are currently serving in the Military:

- U.S. Navy Reserve Lt. Michael Bartilotti
- U.S. Army Pvt. Luke Harshaney
- U.S. Army Pvt. Raymond C. Pizzigoni
- U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Ed Sella
- U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Paul Frabizzio
- U.S. Marine Mer. Cpl. Thomas Tyler Lizak
- U.S. Army Pfc. Sean Parente
- U.S. Marine Pvt. Dante Parente
- U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Casey Wenzel
- U.S. Army Spec. 4 Timothy Francisco
- U.S. Marine LCpl. Stephen Wright
- U.S. Marine Pvt. José Citron

If there are any other military members you would like to be included in our prayers, please contact the Parish Office.

Mount Saint Mary House of Prayer
UPCOMING PROGRAMS: Registration required; call 908-753-2091 or email: msmhope@msmhope.org

Hope in Darkness: Celebrating the Winter Solstice
The shortest day of the year is celebrated in various ways by many cultures. Learn about and celebrate this special day of hope!

Dinner and Advent Prayer included.

Fri., Dec. 20, 5:30-9 p.m. (\$50-\$60 as you are able)

Presenter: Mary Jo Kearns, RSM

**Bus Trip to the
Rally for Life in Trenton**

The Diocese of Metuchen’s Office of Human Life and Dignity will be running a bus trip to the Rally for Life in Trenton, NJ on Wednesday, January 22, 2020. The bus ride is free of charge, but since space is limited all passengers must reserve their seats. Passengers will board the bus at the Diocesan Center in Piscataway at 9:30 AM. The Rally at the State House begins at 11:00 AM and ends at 1:00 PM. Passengers will attend a small reception afterwards. The bus will bring everyone back to the Diocesan Center around 3:00 PM. If you have any questions or would like to reserve a seat please email amarshall@diometuchen.org or call 732-562-1543.



**Third Sunday of Advent – Joy,
Prayer and Gratitude**

A Reflection by Pope Francis

To prepare for the coming of the Lord, let us assume three attitudes. First, constant joy; second, steadfast prayer; third, continuous thanksgiving. Constant joy comes from faith and from the encounter with Jesus Christ, the reason for our happiness. And when we are rooted in Christ, the closer we are to Jesus, the more we find inner peace, even among everyday contradictions for he has come to the earth to restore to mankind the dignity and freedom of the children of God and thereby to give joy. The joy that characterizes the awaiting of the messiah is based on steadfast prayer. By praying we can enter a stable relationship with God, who is the source of true joy. A joy to share with others, an infectious joy that renders the journey of life less toilsome. The third attitude is continuous thanksgiving, which is grateful love towards God. God is very generous to us, and we are invited to always recognize God’s merciful love, patience and goodness, thus living in unceasing thanksgiving. Joy, prayer and gratitude are three attitudes that prepare us to experience Christmas in an authentic way.

For reflection: How might I better express these three attitudes in my behavior today?



**FISH In Need of
Volunteers**

Fish is in urgent need of the following:

Telephone Volunteers – work at home, returning calls from potential clients and scheduling appointments. Hands-on training is provided by our Telephone Chairperson. Volunteers work from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. one day per month. Some work additional days when needed. To learn more, please call the Fish Hotline, 732-356-0881, and leave a message for Debbie.

Van Drivers and Ride-Along Helpers – should be at least 18 years of age and able to lift 60 pounds. People who can commit to a regular schedule and those who can be called to fill in as required are both needed. To learn more, please call the Fish Hotline, 732-968-0081 and leave a message for Lisa.