



St. Matthias Parish Office:

Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm,
168 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873
732-828-1400, fax: 732-828-0866
www.stmatthias.net

Mass Schedule (in person):

Sat - 5 PM, Sun - 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM & 12 noon
M/T/W/Th/F at 8:00 AM
also on our YouTube channel
youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

St. Matthias School (SMS):

170 JFK Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873
www.stmatthias.info 732-828-1402
School Office Hours, Monday - Friday,
7:45 AM - 3:30 PM

For all Parish emails, add @stmatthias.net

Pastor: Rev Abraham Orapankal, **Abraham**
Fr. Lancelot McGrath, **Parochial Vicar Imcgrath**
Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, **Business Administrator**
mpburke-grospin

Deacon Ron Caimi, **Senior Deacon**
Kelly Counts, **Receptionist, kcounts**
Deacon Russell Demkovitz, **rdemkovitz**
Nathalie Godet, **Website & Bulletin Coordinator,**
ngodet

Leslie Guillen, **Bulletin Editor, lguillen**
Amy Hanna, **Accountant/Databases, ahanna**
Mike Lanyi, **Sacristan**

Sue Lenczewski, **Youth Coordinator, SMYLE**

Julio Montero, **Maintenance Supervisor**
Dolores R. Nann, **Pastoral Associate for**
Faith Formation, dnann

Vinnie Natale, **Bookkeeper, vnatale**

Silvia Nizama, **Housekeeper**

Deacon John Radvanski, **deaconjohn**

Joan Best Seamon, **Pastoral Associate for**
Music Ministry, jseamon

Sr. Marie Therese Sherwood, **OSF, Pastoral**
Assoc. for Social Concerns, msherwood

St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)

Mary Lynch, Principal, **mlynch**

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

1st Sunday of Lent



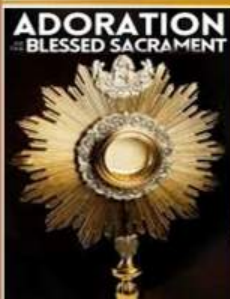
Today's Second Collection is for Catholic Press Month

We Invite You To Join the Life in the Spirit Seminar!

Join us here at St. Matthias on March 2 from 9 am – 3 pm. But what is the Life in the Spirit Seminar? It is a day of retreat focused on deepening a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the sacraments of the Catholic Church and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The reflection topics include God's love, Receiving God's Gift, Growth and Transformation. There will be lively praise and worship, talks and testimonies. It will be a nice spiritual experience for Lent. It is open to all. **Please Save the Date.**

For more information, please contact:

Menchie at 908-458-2995 or cventura0302@gmail.com



**PLEASE COME JOIN THE MANY WHO SPEND
SOME QUIET TIME WITH THE
EUCHARISTIC LORD.
OUR NEXT ADORATION WILL BE
MONDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 19, 2024
FROM 6 PM TO 8 PM.**

This Week @ St. Matthias

Masses are also livestreamed on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

The Church is open for individual prayer

Mon-Fri: 7:30 am to dusk, Sat: 9 am to 6pm, and Sun: 7:30 am to 1 pm, unless another service is taking place.

Sunday, Feb 18, 2024 Catholic Press Month Collection

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
12:00PM	Mass	Church

Monday, Feb 19, 2024 President's Day

SMS & Parish office are closed

St. Conrad of Piacenza, Franciscan & Hermit

8:00AM	No Mass	Church
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Tuesday, Feb 20, 2024 St. Francisco & St. Jacinta, Visionaries of Our Lady of Fatima

8:00AM	Mass	Church
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Wednesday, Feb 21, 2024 St. Peter Damian, Bishop & Doctor

8:00AM	Mass, St. Joseph Novena	Church
7:30PM	Confirmation #2, Gr. 7	John XXIII Rm
7:30PM	Folk Group Rehearsal	Church

Thursday, Feb 22, 2024 Chair of St. Peter, Celebrating St. Peter's Leadership of the church in Rome

8:00AM	Mass	Church
3:30PM	Children's Choir Gr. 3 & 4	Church
4:00PM	Children's Choir Gr. 5-8	Church
7:30PM	Sunday 10AM Choir Rehearsal	Church

Friday, Feb 23, 2024 St. Polycarp of Smyrna, Bishop & Martyr

8:00AM	Mass	Church
7:00PM	Stations of the Cross	Church

Saturday, Feb 24, 2024 St. Adela, Princess of England

3:30PM	Reconciliation	Church
5:00PM	Vigil Mass	Church

Sunday, Feb 25, 2024

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass - Sign Language Interpreter	Church
11:00AM	1st Eucharist Prep #3 Class	John XXIII Rm
12:00PM	Black History Month Mass	Church
3:30PM	SMYLE Youth Grp.	Church



Bulletin Article Requests:

If you would like to send information to be included in our bulletin, please email it to bulletin@stmatthias.net by 9 AM, MONDAY, 5 business days before the needed bulletin date (earlier for holiday weekends). Approved content is published on a space-available basis.

A Message From Our Pastor

Dear Friends,

It was so gratifying to see hundreds of people receiving ashes during the four services in our church and to see hundreds more at the drive-thru ash ministry in our parking lot. That is an excellent sign of the human longing to turn to God. The reception of ashes is the first step to follow God's ways. But, any attempt to build a spiritual life that neglects the pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving is building on sand. That's why the gospel for Ash Wednesday is worth reflecting over again. Please read *Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18. Jesus is teaching us:* Prayer purifies our intentions and relates all we do to God. Fasting detaches us from our comfort and ourselves. Almsgiving reflects our brotherhood with the poor of Jesus' family and reminds us that our true wealth is not in things, but in the love of God. We all need to do a reality check on our spiritual lives to make sure that we are committed to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

In this context, a challenging question for all of us is: how do we make Lent a spiritual success so that we can be more happy? For making any project or goal a success, we all need some motivation. For Lent, the motivation is the awareness that we can be better persons, that we can go beyond our present unhappy state of mind and experience true peace and joy if only we are willing to make some changes in our lives. Keeping this motivation in mind, here are 10 suggestions or ideas to make Lent a successful holy season:

1. Read the Bible.... (a chapter a day?)
2. Attend Mass Daily (or watch it on our YouTube channel before going to bed)...
3. Go to Eucharistic Adoration. ... (6-8 pm on Mondays in our church)
4. Complete a Work of Mercy. ... (visiting a critically ill person, bringing food for that family)
5. Pray the Rosary and/or Divine Mercy Chaplet... (can be done easily in car)
6. Put Together a List of People to Pray for. ... (especially those you know personally)
7. Make a Mini-Pilgrimage....(visit a nearby church or shrine like the Blue Army)
8. Do Spiritual Reading daily ((life of a saint or writings of Pope Francis)
9. Make simple sacrifices (give up an item of food, drinks, practice patience)
10. Pray the Stations of the Cross (privately or at 7 pm in our church on Lenten Fridays)

Here's a prayer we can pray: Lord, you know how much I need you and depend on you. You know my weakness and my faults. I put all my confidence in your love and mercy in my daily actions. I hope to learn to trust more in your power, your promise, and your grace. Lord, I wish to start this season of Lent with a sincere desire to grow in love, loving you more, loving my family and friends more, especially reaching out to those who I am not so fond of. Therefore Lord, help me learn to change what needs to change in my life. Give me the grace to begin this Lent with great enthusiasm and love, practicing a Lenten program of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Help me live it with joy, knowing that I am living it in your presence to please you and to live in true fellowship with those around me. Amen.

Have a happy and holy Lent.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal



Readings for the Week

Monday Lv 19:1-2, 11-18 Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15
Mt 25:31-46

Tuesday Is 55:10-11 Ps 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19 Mt 6:7-15

Wednesday Jon 3:1-10 Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19 Lk 11:29-32

Thursday 1 Pt 5:1-4 Ps 23:1-3a, 4, 5, 6 Mt 16:13-19

Friday Ez 18:21-28 Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8 Mt 5:20-26

Saturday Dt 26:16-19 Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8 Mt 5:43-48

Sunday Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18 Ps 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19 Rom 8:31b-34 Mk 9:2-10



Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Feb 17	5:00PM	Intention of Parishioners
Sunday, Feb 18	8:00AM	John Natale, by Vinnie & Joanne
	10:00AM	Mary Ann Selenko, by Linda & Al Misuraca
	12:00PM	Health & Blessings for Christine L. Mathews, by Aunt Lisa
Monday, Feb 19	8:00AM	No Mass
Tuesday, Feb 20	8:00AM	Eleuterio Banaag, by Minda Vliarica
Wednesday, Feb 21	8:00AM	Susan & James Shinnors, by Mary
Thursday, Feb 22	8:00AM	Jack Gernert, by Sr. Marie Therese
Friday, Feb 23	8:00AM	Jose C. Domingo, Jr., by The Barber Family
Saturday, Feb 24	5:00PM	Adoracion, Felisa, De Guzman & Valdez Family, by Alma
Sunday, Feb 25	8:00AM	Mary Ann Selenko, by Nora & Jack Curley
	10:00AM	Intention of Parishioners Varun & Luke, by Swapna & Manoj Nadu
	12:00PM	Juanito Banaybanay, by The Nonallada Family

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or **email Kelly Counts** at kcunts@stmatthias.net to add the name to this list. Names will be listed in the bulletin for **6 weeks**. Please let us know if this time period needs to be extended. We want to know how you are doing and want to offer you the support of our prayers.

New people on our prayer list are noted in blue.

Beth & Jay Adams	Hattie Evans	Donna Kahora	Gail Miranda	Sr. Bernadine Marie Stemnock
Kristin Baio	Heinley Gaspard	Bill Kelleher	Menchie Molano-Sotelo	Luzviminda Talag
Olga Marie Bando	Claudia Gemgnani	Betsy Kondrat	Danny Ongchango	Jacqueline Taylor
Carolyn Banghart	Emma Gergely	Kathy Langenbacher	Robert Pellegrino	Anita Vance
Ghislaine Baron	Claude Godet	Armando D. Liban	Robert Pietrowiak	Eileen Weber
Helen Bell	Marie Godet	Mary Lou Litakis	Valerie Polci	Nancy Whelan
Samantha Bellouny	Shelly Greene	John Litakis	Kim Price	Theresa Sau-Ling Yung
Carmen Bender	Linda Hartong	Denis Loboda	Denise Pultro	GINETTE ZAMOR
Mary Bostrom	Jeff Hentz	Aries Magali	Doris Regan	Anne Zando
Tara Capatosto	Sloopy & PJ Hoffman	Kenneth & Kelly Magat	Gabriel Rivera	
Elizabeth Card	Gene Horan	Al Maglio	Arina Robinson	And for all who are ill, homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness, we pray.
Kyle Davidson	Marilyn Horvath	Susan, King & Tosh Manansala	Bob Rotz	
Lisa DeFeo	Jerry & Donna Hucul	Alexandra Marquez	Maria Schwenzer	
Zenon DeGuzman	Amanda Isele	Christine Matthews	Amy Shepp	
Vivian Dong	Baby Elaine Isele	Ann McElwee	Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF	
Andrea Dubuisson	Nick Isele	Jessica Marie Merrick		
Dennis Enright	Renée Jolly			

Pray for those who have died...

— "His mercy endures forever." Chronicles

Carmen Skarl

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



LENTEN EFFORT: A new pastor tried in vain to get his congregation to do something for Lent. Exasperated, he announced that he would be serving them prune juice for Holy Communion. When asked why he would dare entertain such a thought, his reply, "If the Holy Spirit won't move you--the prune juice will!" 😊

Announcement in the church bulletin for a National PRAYER & FASTING conference: "The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer conference includes meals." 😊

I gave up online shopping for Lent. Monday I got an e-mail letting me know a purse I had been looking at is on sale.

Couldn't they have done that a week earlier? 😊

Lent is the best time of the year to run a marathon. Because that's when you fast 😊

One good thing about Lent is that Catholics could take another shot at their New Year's resolutions 😊

Overheard during lunch of a kid's play date with friend: "I gave peanut butter up for Lent. What did you give up?" "Being mean to my brother. But we're going to start fighting again on Monday." 😊



Parenting Tune-Up

February 10 began the 2024 Chinese New Year. This year the featured animal is the dragon. Help you children learn about another culture.

Marriage Tune-Up



Ways to Turn Your Beloved Off #10 - Let your body language show disdain or contempt. Rolling your eyes, a scowl, ignoring a request by walking away can speak louder than a yell. Check out any belittling mannerisms you may have that hurt your spouse.



Is it too late to join a Small Group?

Nearly 200 parishioners have just enjoyed the first session of the small groups last week. Is it too late for you to join? **NO!** You are most welcome to join, or at

least to give a try. Just contact Dee Nann in the Parish Office.

On the other hand, are you wondering, what's the point of joining a small group? In fact, a pastor was asked this question. He gave many reasons, but at the end he said: *"But what I feel is one of the most important reasons to join a small group is time. Time is a limited commodity and, frankly, most of us use it badly. We commit to things that are temporal and will pass away, and waste so much of our precious energy growing in everything except love and knowledge of Christ. We unintentionally teach our kids that Church comes after sports and social obligations, and then we are surprised when they grow up and live the lesson we taught. By committing to a small group and being faithful to that obligation, you are declaring to yourself, your schedule and all who know you that you have faith as a priority in your life. A declaration like that will always bear good fruit."*

"Get behind me Satan!"

Experiencing marital problems a Christian couple sought out the advice of a marriage counselor. After numerous sessions, it became quite evident that their problems centered on monetary issues. "You have to quit spending money foolishly" he said. "The next time you feel tempted just forcefully say, 'Get behind me Satan!'" They both agreed that this would work. Within a week things were getting back to normal in their household. The husband quit making his weekly stop at the tool section in the local hardware store and his wife who was chronic spendthrift obsessed with purchasing the latest fashions ceased buying dresses every time she went out to the mall. For whenever they got the urge to spend money they would both repeat the words, the counselor told them, "Get behind me Satan." However, by the third week the woman succumbed to her weakness and bought an extremely expensive evening gown. Her husband was furious "Why didn't you say, 'Get behind me Satan'" "I did" replied his wife "But when I did I heard a response" "Yah and what was that response?" growled back her husband. "Well I heard him say, 'It looks better from the back than it does from the front!'"

Let us use Lent as a time to fight daily against the evil within us and around us: Repenting and fighting against temptations and evil is a lifetime's task. Jesus did not overcome Satan in the wilderness; he achieved that only in his death. Lent reminds us that we have to take up the fight each day against the evil within us and around us, and never give up. Jesus has given the assurance that the Holy Spirit is with us, empowering us so that final victory will be ours through Jesus Christ.

"My year of no shopping"

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. Mark 1: 12-15

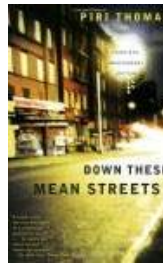
Ann Patchett is the author of the best-selling **Commonwealth**, **Bel Canto** and eight other novels; she is also co-owner of Parnassus Books, an independent bookstore in her hometown of Nashville. At the end of 2016, she writes, "When our country had swung in the direction of gold leaf," she felt the anxiety and fear many Americans were feeling. Inspired by the experience of a friend, Patchett decided to opt out of the empty glitz and resolved that 2017 would be her year of "no shopping." Her ground rules: No clothes or electronics. Shampoo, batteries and printer cartridges were OK, only if she ran out. She could buy anything in a grocery store, including flowers. Plane tickets and eating out in restaurants were also OK. Because she's an author (and owns a book store), she would continue to indulge in buying books, and curtailed her gift-giving to books (one exception: a wedding gift for her editor).

Patchett discovered that "the trick of no shopping isn't that you don't buy things. You don't shop. That means no trawling the sale section of the J. Crew website in idle moments. It means the catalogs go into the recycle bin unopened on the theory that if I don't see it, I don't want it. Halfway through the year I could go to a store with my mother and sister if they asked me. I could tell them if the dress they were trying on looked good without wishing to try it on myself." She also realized the wisdom of what her parents taught her as a child: If you want something, wait awhile. Chances are the feeling will pass. And "once I stopped looking for things to buy, I became tremendously grateful for the things I received."

"The things we buy and buy and buy are like a thick coat of Vaseline smeared on glass: We can see some shapes out there, light and dark, but in our constant craving for what we may still want, we miss life's details . . . I came to a better understanding of money as something we earn and spend and save for the things we want and need. Once I was able to get past the want and be honest about the need, it was easier to give more of my money to people who could really use it. "For the record, I still have more than plenty. I know there is a vast difference between not buying things and being able to buy things. Not shopping for a year hardly makes me one with the poor, but it has put me on the path of figuring out what I can do to help."

This season of Lent challenges us to opt out of business as usual to discover new paths to walk, new ways of seeing, new perspectives to embrace. In giving up shopping for a year, Ann Patchett rediscovered the wealth she already possessed. In Lenten desert experience, Christ calls us to lay aside the material and ephemeral in our lives in order to

realize the lasting treasures that are ours: love, mercy, forgiveness, justice, compassion. These 40 days of Lent are an invitation to us to spend time in the "wilderness," to confront the hard choices we must confront in our lives: choices between the values of God and the values of "Satan," choices between the values we believe in the depths of our hearts and the "marketplace" values of prestige, wealth and security. In making these choices honestly, sincerely and faithfully, we come to a new realization of God as the center of our lives and hopes and a renewed focus on fulfilling the Easter promise in our own lives.



Conversion of Piri Thomas

Piri Thomas wrote a book called Down These Mean Streets. It describes his conversion from being a convict, a drug addict, and an attempted killer, to becoming an exemplary Christian. One night Piri was lying on his cell bunk in prison. Suddenly it occurred to him what a mess he had made of his life. He felt an overwhelming desire to pray. But he was sharing his cell with another prisoner called 'the thin kid.' So he waited. After he thought 'the thin kid' was asleep, he climbed out of his bunk, knelt down on the cold concrete, and prayed. He said, "I told God what was in my heart... I talked to him plain...I talked to him of all my wants and lacks, of my hopes and disappointments... I felt like I could even cry...." After Piri finished his prayer, a small voice said "Amen." It was 'the thin kid.' The two young men talked a long time. Then Piri climbed back into his bunk. "Good night, Chico," he said. "I'm thinking that God is always with us -it's just that we aren't with Him." -This story is a beautiful illustration of what Jesus means when he says, "Reform your lives and believe in the Gospel!"

Let us make Lent a time of renewal of life by penance and prayer: Formerly the six weeks of Lent meant a time of severe penance as a way of purifying ourselves from our sinful habits and getting ready to celebrate the Paschal mystery (the passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ), with a renewed commitment to follow Christ.

Now the Church leaves the Lenten practice of penance to the good will and generosity of individual Christians. However, Lent should be a time for personal reflection on where we stand as Christians in accepting the Gospel challenges in thought, word and deed. It is also a time to assess our relationships with our family, friends, working colleagues and other people we come in contact with, especially those of our parish. We should examine whether we are able to give any positive contribution to other people's lives and to eradicate the abuses which are part of our society.



10 Best Tips for Lent from Pope Francis!

- 1. Get rid of the lazy addiction to evil:** “[Lent] is a ‘powerful’ season, a turning point that can foster change and conversion in each of us. We all need to improve, to change for the better. Lent helps us and thus we leave behind old habits and the lazy addiction to the evil that deceives and ensnares us.”
- 2. Do something that hurts:** “Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt.”
- 3. Don’t remain indifferent:** “Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians. Each year during Lent, we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience. God is not indifferent to our world; he so loves it that he gave his Son for our salvation.”
- 4. Pray: Make our hearts like yours!:** “During this Lent, then, brothers and sisters, let us all ask the Lord: ‘*Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum*’: *Make our hearts like yours* (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). In this way we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference.”
- 5. Take part in the sacraments:** “Lent is a favorable time for letting Christ serve us so that we in turn may become more like him. This happens whenever we hear the word of God and receive the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. There we become what we receive: the Body of Christ.”
- 6. Prayer:** “In the face of so many wounds that hurt us and could harden our hearts, we are called to dive into the sea of prayer, which is the sea of God’s boundless love, to taste his tenderness. Lent is a time of prayer, of more intense prayer, more prolonged, more assiduous, more able to take on the needs of the brethren; intercessory prayer, to intercede before God for the many situations of poverty and suffering.”
- 7. Fasting:** “We must be careful not to practice a formal fast, or one which in truth ‘satisfies’ us because it makes us feel good about ourselves. Fasting makes sense if it questions our security, and if it also leads to some benefit for others, if it helps us to cultivate the style of the Good Samaritan, who bends down to his brother in need and takes care of him.”
- 8. Almsgiving:** “Today gratuitousness is often not part of daily life where everything is bought and sold. Everything is calculated and measured. Almsgiving helps us to experience giving freely, which leads to freedom from the obsession of possessing, from the fear of losing what we have, from the sadness of one who does not wish to share his wealth with others.”
- 9. Help the Poor:** “In the poor and outcast we see Christ’s face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ. Our efforts are also directed to ending violations of human dignity, discrimination and abuse in the world, for these are so often the cause of destitution. When power, luxury and money become idols, they take priority over the need for a fair distribution of wealth. Our consciences thus need to be converted to justice, equality, simplicity and sharing.”
- 10. Evangelize:** “The Lord asks us to be joyous heralds of this message of mercy and hope! It is thrilling to experience the joy of spreading this good news, sharing the treasure entrusted to us, consoling broken hearts and offering hope to our brothers and sisters experiencing darkness.”

A Protestant Testimony about Lent

“Growing up as an evangelical Christian, I experienced Lent as little more than a joke. “What are you giving up for Lent?” my friends would ask. “Homework,” I would say with a smirk, or “Obeying my parents.” Lent was one of those peculiar practices demanded of Roman Catholics – another great reason to be Protestant, I figured. It never even occurred to me that Lent was something I might actually be interested in, benefit from, or decide to keep, or come to value as a way of getting to know God better.

In the last twenty years, I have discovered that millions of Protestant Christians, in addition to Catholic and Orthodox believers, in fact recognize Lent. ... After ignoring Lent for the majority of my life, I’ve paid more attention to it during the last two decades. Sometimes I’ve given up something, like watching television or eating sweets, in order to devote more time to Bible study and prayer. (The television fast was especially tough because I love watching March Madness, the NCAA basketball tournament, on TV.) Sometimes I’ve added extra devotional reading to my regular spiritual disciplines. I can’t claim to have had any mystical experiences during Lent, but I have found that fasting from something has helped me focus on God.”

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markdroberts/>

Pray



Take A Refreshing Pause This Lent! Our Lenten Groups 2024 Have Begun!

You are not late to join a St. Matthias Small Faith Sharing Group if you wish to.

We have about 15 groups that meet on various days/times of the week.

If you are new to this experience, please sign up online: www.stmatthias.net/livelent/

Facilitators will be contacting group members who have been part of their group. Each group likely will be meeting on Zoom usually on the same date/time. **Groups began last week! New members, please sign-up ASAP!**



FAMILY MATTERS

JOIN US AS WE EMPOWER CATHOLIC PARENTS TO LIVE OUT THE MISSION

Family Matters is a new initiative of the Center for FaithJustice in partnership with RENEW International. It is a process for nurturing discipleship among parents and caregivers as they enrich their own faith lives to more vibrantly pass on Catholic social tradition to their children.

St. Matthias will be piloting this program for families/children this year! Join us!



Parents and families will have access to:

- Online resources
- In-person gatherings at their parish
- Home based activities
- Mentorship from other Catholic parents in your parish
- Access to Spiritual Direction
- Retreats and Service opportunities with other families

Interested in joining? We will begin by hosting listening sessions for interested parents and families this spring!

Sign up for the listening session.

Email Dee Nann: dnann@stmatthias.net

With you on the journey!

Center for FaithJustice, RENEW International

Serve

The Ordained and Consecrated Life: Continuing the Mission of Jesus Christ in Our World



Two weeks ago, on the occasion of World Day for Consecrated Life, we offered our thanks and prayers to our Sisters for their service to God and our parish community. Our gratitude is inspired by the great character, dedication, and

faithfulness that we see in Sister Marie Therese and Sister Maria. Our prayers are motivated by the knowledge that a vocation, whether it be to the consecrated life of our Sisters or the ordained life of our priests and deacons, is not an easy one - one that can only be faithfully undertaken with God's help. Our prayers are also motivated by our concerns for the future.

We are all aware that here in the United States we have a very real shortage of those accepting the call to the consecrated and ordained life. Statistics have shown a steady decline in the number of priests, deacons, sisters, and brothers over the recent decades. Regarding the priesthood, the number of young men responding to this sacred vocational call continues to decline. This, coupled with the retirement of so many "baby boomer" priests, has resulted in a severe shortage of priests, creating a serious challenge for our church.

Those who take up the Catholic priestly vocation play a crucial role in shaping and sustaining our parish communities. The ordained priesthood serves as the backbone of the Church, facilitating its mission of spreading

the Gospel, and providing pastoral care and spiritual formation to all of the faithful. Because Catholic priestly vocations are essential for the celebration of the sacraments, as the priest shortage grows worse the sacramental life of the Church may be severely compromised, depriving believers of essential channels of grace and spiritual nourishment.

The Catholic Church faces significant challenges in fostering and sustaining these vocations in the contemporary world where secularism, individualism, and materialism are eroding traditional religious values and practices, and where clerical scandal concerns remain at the forefront of peoples' minds.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for fostering Catholic priestly vocations. Catholic clergy around the country are doing what they can. But Catholic lay people also play a crucial role in promoting and encouraging priestly vocations. The Saint Matthias Vocations Ministry Team is looking to work with our parish community to help in this regard. We will explore this in part three of this series to be found in next week's bulletin.

If you'd like more information about the Saint Matthias Vocations Ministry, feel free to email Joe Percoco at percoco@rutgers.edu.

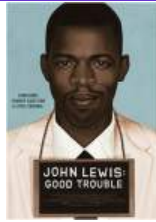
"Where the needs of the world and your talents cross, there lies your vocation."



St. Matthias School is looking for help in the following areas:

- After School Program (Paid Position)
- Substitute Teachers (\$95 a day)
- School Advisory Council (Finance Volunteer)
- Athletic Association (Directors/Board Member Volunteers)
- School Finance Members (Volunteers)
- Marketing (Stipend)

Please email **Mrs. Mary Lynch**, Principal at mlynch@stmatthiasnj.org for more information.



Zoom Movie Night

DATE: Saturday, February 17th
TIME: 6:30 pm via Zoom (link below)

We never know what weather February will bring us, so please join us for a special at-home Black History Month Zoom movie night! We will be watching the documentary film **John Lewis: Good Trouble**, followed by some reflection questions.

RSVP to matthiasracialjustice@gmail.com by Friday, February 16th to receive the Zoom link. Please put on your pj's, pop some popcorn, and join us from the comfort of your own home!

Join Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 364 718 9959

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3647189959?omn=85156549693>

ALL ARE WELCOME!

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2024 AT ST. MATTHIAS

The SMDP Society features three of the SMS contest winners – the 3rd Place winner and two honorable mentions. All winners were from the literary arts category. (The theme of the contest was “African American and the Arts”). Congratulations to 8th grader Lemi Bartholemieux-Doxy (3rd Place) for his poem below, “Black History Continues to Flourish”. Connor Lyons and Isabel McGuire, 8th grade, won honorable mentions for their essays, *History of African Music* and *Medgar Evers* (accomplished lawyer and Civil Rights icon who was murdered by the KKK in 5307).



3rd PLACE WINNER

Black History Continues to Flourish
 by Lemi Bartholemieux-Doxy

In the bustling streets of history
 where shadows of oppression cast their long gaze,
 Black culture emerged,
 A resilient phoenix rising from the ashes of struggle.
 Langston Hughes, a poetic maestro, captured the heartbeat of this culture, a rhythm that
 refused
 to be silenced.
 From the days of cotton fields,
 where the echoes of sorrow were met with soulful hymns, to the pulsating energy of urban life,
 Black culture has not merely survived;
 it has flourished.
 The roots of heritage run deep, intertwining tales of triumph and tribulation, creating a
 vibrant
 tapestry that defies erasure.
 Zora Neal Hurston's tales and Hughes' poetic verses became anthems of resistance,
 celebrating the beauty and strength of blackness.
 As time marched on, the narrative evolved.
 Gospel choirs filled the air with melodies of faith,
 while the streets resonated with the raw beats of hip-hop,
 Each verse a testament to resilience and the unyielding spirit of black culture.
 In the quiet moments, under the ebony sky,
 The stories persist-the struggles, the victories, the unbreakable bond that weaves
 through time.
 Langston's legacy lives on, echoing in the whisper of the poetry
 Black culture is not a relic of the past;
 it is a dynamic force,
 an ever-evolving symphony that continues to shape the world with its enduring presence.

Give (and Receive!)

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024				Last Year's Total
	In-Pew/Mail	Parish Giving	Weekly Total	Weekly Total
Week 32 - Feb. 4, 2024	\$9,212.00	\$14,321.25	\$23,533.25	\$27,203.19
Week 33 - Feb. 11, 2024	\$28,220.98	\$24,888.75	\$53,109.73	\$34,482.25
Week 34 - Feb. 18, 2024			\$0.00	\$21,453.11
Week 35 - Feb. 25, 2024			\$0.00	\$21,303.25
			Month-to-date Total	Month-to-date Total
			\$76,642.98	\$104,441.80
			Current Year-to-date Total	Current Year-to-date Total
			\$2,227,818.03	\$940,542.52

Stewardship Reflection February 18, 2024 1st Sunday of Lent

"After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God..." - Mark 1:14

Have you ever thought about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to go to Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that He was proclaiming. It took great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, living a stewardship lifestyle takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that He will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us.

Reflexiónese 18 de febrero de 2024 1^{er} Domingo de Cuaresma

"Después de que encarcelaran a Juan, Jesús se fue a Galilea a anunciar las buenas nuevas de Dios". - Marcos 1:14

Alguna vez ha pensado lo difícil que debió ser para Jesús ir a Galilea, sabiendo que Juan había sido arrestado por enseñar el mismo mensaje que Él estaba proclamando. Jesús tuvo un gran amor y confianza para hacer lo que el Padre le había enviado a cumplir en la tierra. De la misma manera, tener un estilo de vida de corresponsabilidad supone un gran amor y confianza de nuestra parte. Debemos tener la voluntad de rendirnos completamente a Dios, confiando que Él siempre nos dará todo lo que necesitamos para cumplir el plan que tiene dispuesto para nosotros.

Connect

ATTENTION SENIORS ~ SAVE THE DATE

All Seniors are invited to attend a Yoga Presentation and Demonstration by Yoga Teacher Chanchal Arora:

Saturday - March 23, 1:30 - 2:30 pm in the School Cafeteria

Chair Yoga
Positions



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SPRING Into MENTAL HEALTH – March 9th & 10th, 2024 at St. Matthias



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Guest Speakers



Giveaways/Raffles



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Questions: Call the St. Matthias Parish Office 732-828-1400 or email smyle@stmatthias.net

Connecting to Our Local Community



Free Tax Preparation Offered through United Way of Northern New Jersey

The United Way of Northern NJ & its partners are offering FREE tax preparation services for low and moderate income households. **At no cost to you**, IRS tax-law certified preparers will help you claim all the credits you are eligible for and get what you are owed. Tax Filing began on 2/1/2024.

Visit uwnnj.org/freetaxprep

For information about scheduling appointments, access free self-filing software, and get answers to question.

For additional information, call 973-993-1160, ext. 5. E-mail: UnitedWayTaxPrep@UnitedWayNNJ.org



LIVING THE LENT WE GET

March 2, 2024 • 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Presenter: Christine Eberle

What if we approached Lent as an invitation, rather than a challenge?

In the first part of this retreat, we will explore how to let life become its own Lenten discipline, calling us to prayer, sacrifice, and generosity through the ordinary experiences of each day. In the afternoon, in the company of the Samaritan Woman at the Well, we will listen for Jesus' invitation to allow ourselves to be seen, known, and cherished by God—just as we are.

Ways to Register and Participate:

- In-person for the day—Donation: \$30 (includes lunch)
- Overnight Friday and attending the Retreat Saturday - Donation: \$85
- Virtual Participation Donation: \$20

To register for the retreat please email: S. Joannie Cassidy a jlc.cassidy@gmail.com or call (732) 898-9981.

Sisters of St. Joseph, Center for Spirituality, 21 Main Avenue, Ocean Grove, NJ 07756



Metuchen Cursillo Movement

Annual Encounter with Christ

Saturday, March 9, 2024 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Mary, Mother of God Church 157 S. Triangle Road Hillsborough, NJ

Speakers:

Fr. Luke Fletcher, CFR (Blue Army Shrine, Asbury)

Dcn. Sal Bonfiglio, OFS (Mary, Mother of God Church, Hillsborough)

Light Refreshments, Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross

NOTE: No admission fee, but there will be a free will offering

To Register: www.metcursillo.org/events-encounter.htm

Parish Leadership

Parish Pastoral Council:	Co-Secretaries:	<i>Sheila Tartaglia</i>	Parish Finance Council:	Cory Panlilio
Co-Chairs:	Stephen Busono	Fr. Lancelot McGrath,	Kester Hector, Chair	Mary Pat Burke-Grospin,
Frank Rees	sbusono@gmail.com	Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio	Finance Council	Ex-Officio
Frees814@gmail.com	Bill Isele	Trustees:	@stmatthias.net	Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio
Marilyn Wegg	t33sm@aol.com	Pearl Scott	Carmen Driz-Melilli	
mcw-wam@comcast.net	Al Drabnis	Marge Richards	Barry Dusault	
	Didi Molano		Joan Pritchard	

About St. Matthias (please contact the staff members on the cover for up-to-date information)

Parish Registration — Welcome to St. Matthias! Please register on our website. www.stmatthias.net/join-us, or visit the Parish Office.

Marriage — Registered parishioners should contact the parish office a year before the desired wedding date.

Baptism — Baptismal Preparation Sessions are held four times a year for registered parishioners. Please contact the parish office before the baby is born. The sacrament of Baptism is celebrated on the second and fourth Sunday of each month, except during Lent.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) - If you are interested in becoming a Catholic or completing the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist, please call the Parish Office.



St. Matthias School is a PreK3 through 8th grade school rooted in faith, inspired by love, and dedicated to academic excellence. Before and After School Care Programs are available. Come visit! Contact 732-828-1402 to schedule a tour.

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