



#### 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](http://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](https://youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ)

#### St. Matthias School (SMS):

170 JFK Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873  
[www.stmatthias.info](http://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 **lmcgrath**  
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**

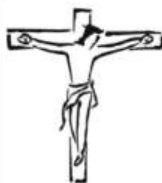
St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)

Mary Lynch, Principal, **mlynch**

## THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS

### SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024

#### 4th Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday



#### Ministry Led Stations of the Cross During Lent

Join us every Friday  
during Lent for the  
Stations of the Cross  
at 7:00 PM.

Different Ministries  
from our parish are  
leading this devotion  
with a different  
reflection each Friday.



SPRING INTO MENTAL HEALTH

SELF-CARE FAIR  
TODAY



HERE AT ST. MATTHIAS IN THE CAFETERIA

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

#### FR. ABRAHAM IS CALLING ALL MEN OF OUR PARISH!

*"In today's world, Catholic men are attacked from all sides. The world entices them to live only for themselves. It tells them to abdicate their God-given call to be leaders of the Church and their families. Too many Catholic men have given in and become caught up in vice and addiction. They feel empty, alone, unworthy and even unlovable. They're hungering for more, but don't know where to turn."*

Hello gentlemen, do you find any truth in the above statement? If so, here's some good news: our Diocesan Office of Evangelization is organizing a "Leadership Summit for Men." It will be held in our neighborhood: at Mary, Mother of God parish in Hillsborough on Friday evening and Saturday morning, April 26-27. I wish to invite all the men of our parish to consider attending this event so you will be empowered to focus on the things that matter to you.

For more details, please email me at [abraham@stmatthias.net](mailto:abraham@stmatthias.net)

## This Week @ St. Matthias

Masses are also livestreamed on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ](https://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, Mar 10, 2024**

**All Day Mental Health Fair 9 PM - 3PM Cafeteria**  
 8:00AM Mass Church  
 10:00AM Mass –Sign Language & Church  
 10:00AM Family Mass Church  
 11:00AM Children's Liturgy K-5 John XXIII Rm  
 11:00AM 1st Eucharist Prep #4 Classrooms  
 12:00PM Mass Church

**Monday, Mar 11, 2024 St. Eulogius of Cordoba, Priest & Martyr**

8:00AM Mass Church  
 6:00PM Eucharist Adoration Church

**Tuesday, Mar 12, 2024 St. Fina ( Or Serafina)**

8:00AM Mass Church  
 6:30PM HSA : General Mtg. Cafeteria  
 7:30PM Handbell Choir rehearsal Church

**Wednesday, Mar 13, 2024 St. Euphrasia of Constantinople, Religious**

8:00AM Mass, St. Joseph Novena Church  
 7:30PM Confirmation #3 Gr. 7 John XXIII Rm  
 7:30PM Folk Group Rehearsal Church

**Thursday, Mar 14, 2024 St. Matilda, Queen of Germany**

**PI Day**

8:00AM Mass Church  
 2:00PM HSA PI Day Cafeteria  
 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, Mar 15, 2024 St. Louise of Marilla Co-founder of Daughters of Charity**

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

**Saturday, Mar 16, 2024 St. Heribert of Cologne, Archbishop**

9:30AM Secular Franciscans de Porres Rm  
 10:00AM 1st Eucharist Retreat: Parent & Child Cafeteria  
 3:30PM Reconciliation Church  
 5:00PM Vigil Mass Church

**Sunday, Mar 17, 2024 St. Patrick's Day**

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

### Bulletin Article Requests:

If you would like to send information to be included in our bulletin, please email it to [bulletin@stmatthias.net](mailto: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,



This Sunday we hold the Self Care Fair in our cafeteria. We have been promoting this event together with the “Empty Bowls Franklin” that takes place at the Double Tree hotel today. In this context, I think it is very fitting that we ask an important question: Should the church be concerned only with the spiritual health of the parishioners? Traditionally the answer we hear may be ‘YES.’ But the answer from the Bible is ‘NO!’ The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: “*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” There are many other references to show how the Bible is interested not only in our soul-health but also in the health of our body and mind. Here are just a few:

*Genesis.* 1:29 “*And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.”*

3 John 1:2 “*Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well”.*

1 Timothy 5:23: “*Do not go on drinking only water, but also use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.”*

*Proverbs 12:25 “Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.”.*

*Jeremiah 30:17 “For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the Lord, because they have called you an outcast: ‘It is Zion, for whom no one cares!’”*

*Psalms 147:3 “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”.*

This inter-connectedness of mind, body and soul that the Bible teaches is corroborated by many researches. Look at some of their conclusions:

1. Acidity is caused not only by diet errors, but more dominated because of stress.
2. Hypertension is caused not only by too much consumption of salty foods, but mainly because of too much worries about future.
3. Cholesterol is caused not only by fatty foods, but the excessive laziness or sedentary lifestyle is more responsible.
4. Asthma not only because of the disruption of oxygen supply to lungs, but often sad feelings make lungs unstable.
5. Diabetes not only because of too much consumption of glucose, but selfish & stubborn attitude disrupts the function of the pancreas.

Today's Self Care Fair organized by our Youth Ministry/SMYLE - in collaboration with St. Augustine's Kendall Park, Holy Family, New Brunswick, and St. Joseph, Bound Brook - is truly an effort to be holistic in our faith formation. The God of the Bible wants our growth in all life dimensions: physical or biological, mental or psychological, moral and social. The disciplines of medicine, psychology, even organizational development. Luke 2:52 captures in the life of Christ this holistic concept: “*Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men*” It is this holistic growth that we are promoting here in our parish through various events and activities. I invite us all to participate and be more holistic in our thinking and living.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal

## Readings for the Week

**Monday** Is 65:17-21 Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a and 13b Jn 4:43-54

**Tuesday** Ez 47:1-9, 12 Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9 Jn 5:1-16

**Wednesday** Is 49:8-15 Ps 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18 Jn 5:17-30

**Thursday** Ex 32:7-14 Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23 Jn 5:31-47

**Friday** Wis 2:1a, 12-22 Ps 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23 Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

**Saturday** Jer 11:18-20 Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12 Jn 7:40-53

**Sunday** Jer 31:31-34 Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15 Heb 5:7-9 Jn 12:20-33



## Mass Intentions for the Week

|                          |         |  |
|--------------------------|---------|--|
| <b>Saturday, Mar 9</b>   | 5:00PM  | Joseph Moran, by The Family                                  |
| <b>Sunday, Mar 10</b>    | 8:00AM  | Health & Blessings for Menchie Molano-Sotelo, by Didi & Cory |
|                          | 10:00AM | Deacon Peter J. O'Neill, by Alice Richards                   |
|                          | 12:00PM | Intention of Parishioners                                    |
| <b>Monday, Mar 11</b>    | 8:00AM  | Mary Lenihan, by The Family                                  |
| <b>Tuesday, Mar 12</b>   | 8:00AM  | Roseann Szani, by Mom, Gladys                                |
| <b>Wednesday, Mar 13</b> | 8:00AM  | Brazil Vidal, by Kathleen Referente and Family               |
| <b>Thursday, Mar 14</b>  | 8:00AM  | Myrtha L. Petrus, by Yanick Andre                            |
| <b>Friday, Mar 15</b>    | 8:00AM  | Patrick Flynn, by Ann Marie Sequeira                         |
| <b>Saturday, Mar 16</b>  | 5:00PM  | Intention of Parishioners                                    |
| <b>Sunday, Mar 17</b>    | 8:00AM  | Martin Slyman, by The Varona Family                          |
|                          | 10:00AM | Armando Delprado, by the Sunday 10AM Alto Section            |
|                          | 12:00PM | Birthday Blessings for Alma Valdez, by Anne Marie Francis    |

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

## Pray for those who have died...

— "His mercy endures forever." Chronicles

Doris Regan,

Jacqueline Hunt



## Reflect



### Smile with Your Family



In Denver, the members of a Sunday-school class were asked to set down their favorite biblical truths. One youngster laboriously printed: "Do one to others as others do one to you." ☺

Two Hollywood stars ran into each other at the door of their psychiatrist's office. "Hello, there," said one. "Are you coming or going?" "If I knew that," said the other, "I wouldn't be here." ☺

At a party, a young wife admonished her husband, "That's the fourth time you've gone back for ice cream and cake. Doesn't it embarrass you?" "Why should it?" answered her spouse. "I keep telling them it's for you." ☺

#### **Funny Newspaper headlines:**

Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Experts Say ☺

Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers ☺

Teacher Strikes Idle Kids ☺

Miners Refuse to Work After Death ☺

Stolen Painting Found by Tree ☺

Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charge ☺

Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half ☺

Typhoon Rips through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead ☺



#### **Parenting Tune-Up**

**John 3:16: " ... God sent His only begotten Son to love and save... not to condemn..."**

Have a discussion at the dinner table about the unhealthy tendency to judge or condemn others. Instill in kids the fruits of practicing love and appreciation.

#### **Marriage Tune-Up**



**John 3:16: "God so loved the world ..."**

How do you rate your love for your spouse?

Intense, lukewarm, or faded? How do you rekindle your original love and care for this most significant person in your life?

### **BE A SPORT AND TAKE THE BMW !!!**

**" ... God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." John 3: 14-21**



A couple went on their dream vacation to Hawaii. The husband, an organized and frugal man, had reserved compact rental cars on each of the four islands. On

arriving on the Big Island and presenting their reservation to the car rental desk, they were told that the economy car they had reserved was not available. The wife steeled herself as her husband's face reddened in preparation for battle. But the clerk did not seem to notice. "I'm sorry, sir," he said, "Will you accept an upgrade substitute for the same price?" Barely mollified, her husband put their bags in a beautiful white sports car and they drove off.

The same thing happened throughout their holiday. They would turn in their car and fly to the next island, only to be told that the budget car they had been promised was not available and offered a same-price substitution. It was amazing, she said later. For the price of a small compact,

they had been given a Lincoln Town Car, or a Mercedes - all with the sincerest apologies of the rental agencies. The vacation was absolutely wonderful and on the flight home, she turned to her husband to thank him for all he had done to arrange such a memorable time. "Yes," he said, "it was really nice. It's just too bad they never had the right car for us." He was absolutely serious.

**This poor guy is so rigid in his perspective and demanding in his expectations that he can't see or appreciate the good things right in front of him. In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges us to see God beyond our limited and narrow perspective: to see the love of God all around us in the love of family and friends, in the beauty and bounty of all creation, in every act of justice and mercy we witness. Jesus reveals a much bigger God than we can imagine: a God who does not condemn but loves, who does not punish but lifts up, who does not destroy but reconciles. This is the God we meet in the person of Jesus - God who is loving Father, compassionate Physician, wise and generous Friend - and in whom we discover our identity as children of God and participants with God in the work of re-creation.**



## The Hound of Heaven

*The Hound of Heaven*, written by Francis Thompson, is one of the best-known religious poems in the English language. It describes the pursuit of the human soul by God. The poem tells the story of a human soul who tries to flee from God as it thinks that it will lose its freedom in the company of God. It is the story of Thompson's own life. As a boy, he intended to become a priest. However, the laziness of his brilliant son prompted Thompson's father to enroll young Francis in a medical school. There he became addicted to the opium that almost wrecked his body and mind. He fled to a slum and started earning a living by shining shoes, selling matches, and holding horses. In 1887 Francis sent some poems and an essay to Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, the editor of a Catholic literary magazine called *Merry England*. The editor recognized the genius behind these works and published them in April 1888. Then Meynell went in search of the poet. He arranged accommodation for Francis, introduced him to other poets and helped him to realize God's love. How Francis tried to run away from God, how God "hunted" him, how Divine love caught up with him – these are the themes of his stirring poem, *The Hound of Heaven*.

***Once we realize, as did the poet Francis Thompson and all the saints, that God pursues our souls to the ends of the earth and beyond, then we will try to return to that love and allow the Hound of Heaven to "catch" us. Today's Gospel tells us about the breadth and depth and height of the Divine love of the Hound of Heaven for each one of us. We need to reciprocate God's love by loving others. God's love is unconditional, universal, forgiving and merciful. Let us try, with His help, to make an earnest attempt to include these qualities as we share our love with others during Lent.***

### WHY IS TODAY NAMED LAETARE (REJOICE) SUNDAY?

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is called *Lætare* (Rejoice) Sunday, from the first words of the day's liturgy [the *Introit*]. Since this Sunday occurs in the middle of Lent, as *Gaudete* Sunday is celebrated midway through Advent, *Lætare* Sunday reminds us of the Event we look forward to at the end of the penitential season. As on *Gaudete* Sunday, rose-colored vestments may replace violet, with flowers on the altar. These outward signs symbolize the Church's joy in anticipation of the Resurrection, a joy which cannot be contained even in Lent, though we still refrain from Alleluias and the singing of the Gloria until the magnificence of the Easter Vigil.



## Glimpse of God's love in the Amtrak tragedy

Near Mobile, Alabama, there was a railroad bridge that spanned a big bayou. The

date was September 22, 1993. It was a foggy morning, just before daybreak, when a tugboat accidentally pushed a barge into the bayou. The drifting barge slammed into the river bridge. In the darkness no one could see the extent of the damage, but someone on the tugboat radioed the Coast Guard. Minutes later, an Amtrak train, the *Sunset Limited*, reached the bridge as it traveled from Los Angeles to Miami. Unaware of the damage, the train crossed the bridge at 70 mph. There were 220 passengers on board. As the weight of the train broke the support, the bridge gave away. Three locomotive units and the first four of the train's eight passenger cars fell into the alligator infested bayou. In the darkness, the fog was thickened by fire and smoke. Six miles from land, the victims were potential food for the aroused alligators. Helicopters were called in to help rescue the victims. Rescuers were able to save 163 persons. But one rescue stands out. Gary and Mary Jane Chancey were waiting in the railcar with their eleven-year-old daughter Andrea. When the car went into the bayou and began to fill rapidly with water, there was only one thing they could do. They pushed their young daughter through the window into the hands of a rescuer, and then succumbed to their watery death.

***Their sacrificial love stands out especially because their daughter was imperfect by the world's standards. She was born with cerebral palsy and needed help with even the most routine things. But she was precious to her parents. We, too, are imperfect – our lives filled with mistakes, sin and helplessness. But we are still precious to God – so precious that He sacrificed his Son Jesus to save us. Today's Gospel tells us how a perfect God sent His perfect Son to save an imperfect world.***





## NICODEMUS IN ART AND HISTORY

One of Rembrandt's most famous etchings portrays the scene. The limp, dead body of Jesus was slowly taken down from the cross. Joseph of Arimathea, dressed as the person that

he was, in all his finery, stands close by. In the darkness, further away, veiled in shadow as only Rembrandt could do it, with his face lined in sorrow, is Nicodemus. He is holding in his hands the linen cloth in which Jesus' body would be buried.

*The Gospel says that Nicodemus also brought with him a mixture of spices, myrrh and aloes, "about a hundred pounds". One wonders what Nicodemus must have been thinking as he stood there, waiting for the body of Christ to be taken down from the cross. Obviously, much was going on in his life -- this wealthy man, bringing fine linen and a bountiful amount of expensive spices to anoint the body of one who had died as a common criminal. Was he still mystified as he had been when Jesus told him that he must be born again? Was he still puzzled by the response of Jesus when he pressed his question about how one could be born again? Jesus' answer had been totally unsatisfying for his rational mind: "The Spirit blows where it wills -- you feel it, and you hear the sound of it -- but you don't know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

## A LITTLE GIRL'S ADVICE TO HER DOCTOR!

A little girl went to the doctor for a check-up. When the doctor came into the examining room, she held up both hands to get his attention and then she said: "Doctor, I know what you are going to do. You are going to do 5 things. You are going to check my eyes, my ears, my nose, my throat and my heart." The Doctor smiled and said: "Well, Sarah that is exactly right. Is there any particular order I should go in?" Sarah said: "You can go in any order you want to... but if I were you, I'd start with the heart!!!"

*That's what Jesus did, wasn't it? He started with the heart. He started with Love... and that is precisely what he wants us to do! John 3:16 is probably the best-loved verse in the Bible and it has been called "everybody's text" and the "Gospel of the Gospels." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." This is the summary of the Gospel message of salvation through Christ Jesus. This text is the very essence of the Gospel. It tells us that the initiative in all salvation is God's love for man. As St. Augustine puts it: "God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love." It also explains to us the universality of the love of God. God's motive is love and God's objective is salvation. Those who actually receive eternal life must believe in the Son.*

## "BELIEVE IN THE GOD WHO BELIEVES IN YOU!"



Mother Teresa was interviewed on American television a few years ago. She said, "It is very, very important, that the families teach their children to pray and pray with them."

Then she added, "And we have enough reason to trust God, because when we look at the cross, we understand how much Jesus loved us. It is wonderful to be able to come to Jesus! That's why God made Him -- to be our bread of life, to give us life! And with His life comes new life! New energy! New peace! New joy! New everything! And I think that's what brings glory to God, also, and it brings peace." Then she said, "I've seen families suffer so much, and when they've been brought to Jesus, it changes their whole lives." [Robert H. Shuller. *Believe in the God Who Believes in You*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), p. 126.]

*I have also seen lives changed by the power of the cross. Have you? Today's Gospel gives a parallel between the bronze serpent erected by Moses to heal the Israelites bitten by snakes and Jesus raised on the cross to save mankind.*

## "Gee. Mom, she thinks I'm real!"

There is an old story about a family consisting of mother, father, and small son who went into a restaurant. As they were seated at the table, the waitress sailed up. You know, the particular kind of waitress who moves as though she were the captain of a ship. She sailed up, pad in efficient hand, looked, and waited. The parents ordered. Then the boy looked up and said plaintively, "I want a hot dog." "No hot dog!" said the mother. "Bring him potatoes, beef, and a vegetable." The waitress paused for a moment, and then looked at the boy squarely and said, "Yes, sir. What do you want on your hot dog?" "Ketchup - lots of ketchup - and a glass of milk." "One hot dog, coming up," said the waitress and sailed off toward the kitchen. The boy turned to his parents and said, "Gee, Mom, she thinks I'm real!"

*One reason that we are real is because God thinks we are real. He created all of us to be His children. That process of becoming God's children may be for us as radical as being born anew, as Jesus told Nicodemus, but it is precisely that for which we were created. For Christians, to be real is to allow ourselves to be loved by God, and to love God in return, which, according to St. John, means doing the truth.*



## From the Vocations Ministry

### CALLING ALL CATHOLICS: PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING VOCATIONS



This is the third in a series of reflections on the topic of vocations to the ordained and consecrated life. In the first reflection we expressed our admiration and gratitude to the ordained and consecrated men and women of our parish – our priests, deacons, and sisters. The second reflection focused on the current challenges and future implications associated with the dwindling number of those answering the call to the ordained and consecrated life. This third reflection explores what we lay Catholics can do to help. Catholic lay people play an important role in promoting and encouraging vocations to the ordained and consecrated life. While the responsibility for discerning and responding to a vocation ultimately rests with the individual called by God, lay Catholics can actively support and nurture vocations through their prayers, witness, and practical assistance.

First and foremost, all Catholics can pray earnestly for an increase in vocations. With our hearts and minds prayerfully attuned to God's will, we ask God to bless his church with more priests, deacons, brothers, and sisters. We ask God to open the hearts and minds of our youth and their parents so that they might see Catholic vocations as a noble pursuit and a fulfilling life choice. We ask God that those called are granted the grace of discernment guided by the Holy Spirit. We ask God to inspire all lay Catholics to support and encourage those called by God to the ordained and consecrated life. Secondly, we can provide our youth with positive role models of faithful discipleship. By living out our faith authentically and joyfully we can demonstrate to our youth the richness and fulfillment of a life dedicated to God's service. Parents can be instrumental in this regard by creating a family life characterized by “vocational awareness”. Attending Mass regularly, participating in the sacramental life of our church, creating opportunities for family dialogue on vocations, and sharing personal testimonies about one's faith life can inspire our youth to explore their spiritual gifts and interests, encourage vocational discernment, and affirm their sense of calling.

Finally, lay people can actively support vocations through practical activities. This could include involvement in parish initiatives such as vocation information sessions, vocation prayer services, discernment retreats, and other vocation awareness efforts. Regarding this last point, the Saint Matthias Vocations Ministry Team is currently planning vocation-related events for this coming Spring and Fall. Please stay tuned. We need your help and welcome your involvement! Together, through our prayers, our witness, and our involvement in vocation-related activities we can create a culture of vocations in our parish, and a spiritual atmosphere conducive to hearing and responding to God's call. For now, let's each of us pray on all of this, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance as we continue to build up God's Church.

*If you'd like more information about the Saint Matthias Vocations Ministry, feel free to email Joe Percoco at [percoco@rutgers.edu](mailto:percoco@rutgers.edu).*

## Learn



### CAMP INVENTION AT ST. MATTHIAS SCHOOL!

**June 17-21, 2024**

Thanks to rave reviews from campers, parents, and teachers, we're bringing **Camp Invention** back for its 7th year at St. Matthias School!



**Camp Invention®**

Even better, our 2024 program is full of all-new, hands-on STEM fun!

Don't miss out—register students going into grades Kindergarten - 6th grade at [invent.org/mylocalcamp](https://invent.org/mylocalcamp) until camp starts. Register by **March 27<sup>th</sup>** using **FUN25** to **save \$25** or by **May 16<sup>th</sup>** using **FUN15** to **save \$15**! If you have multiple children use **SIBLOVE30** to **save \$30** for 2 siblings and **SIBLOVE40** to **save \$40** for 3 or more siblings!

Contact Camp Director, **Christine Taylor** at [ctaylor@stmatthiasnj.org](mailto:ctaylor@stmatthiasnj.org) for any questions.

**Camp Week: June 17-21, 2024**

For students 7th grade to 9th grade, you can register as Leaders-in-Training to help support the teachers at a discounted registration fee and for students 10th grade and up you can get 40 volunteer hours by registering and helping that week!

## Pray

### Chrism Mass

On **Tuesday, March 26, 2024**, Bishop James F. Checchio will celebrate the Chrism Mass with the priests of the Diocese. At this Mass, all priests will make a Renewal of Commitment to Priestly Service to the Bishop and the people of God. The Bishop will also bless and consecrate the Holy Oils, which each parish receives for the rites of anointing.

The Oil of Catechumens is used to anoint infants and adults before their Baptism; the Oil of the Sick is used on the forehead and hands of the infirm in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick; and Sacred Chrism is used to anoint the head of the newly baptized, the foreheads of confirmandi, the hands of a priest at his ordination, the head of a bishop at his ordination, and the altar and walls of new churches. If you have never attended a Chrism Mass, it will be a nice experience to join in-person or via Livestream in the ancient, grace-filled **Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi in Metuchen at 4:00 PM.**

## Connect



### ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETS VIRTUALLY ON March 13<sup>th</sup> AT 2 PM

The Alzheimer's Association and Saint Matthias Catholic Church are co-hosting a monthly Support Group for individuals living with Alzheimer's or Dementia, their care partners, and others dealing with the disease. Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00 pm-3:00 pm on Zoom.**

Registration is required in order to get the Zoom link. To register, call 800-272-3900 and mention the St. Matthias group.

The Group provides a safe and supportive environment and offers dementia-related education, emotional support, and connections with resources so that the group members may enhance their lives in the midst of the journey.

For more information, visit [alz.org/NJ](http://alz.org/NJ)

### A DAY OF SERVICE

The next Morning of Service will be held on **Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>**. If you are interested in volunteering that morning, please email **John and Coleen Zdziarski** at [jzdzarski@comcast.net](mailto:jzdzarski@comcast.net). Please note that those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. The sites are:

1. Franklin Food Bank - 224 Churchill Avenue in Somerset - sorting canned goods, etc. Minimum age is 14. Limited to six people (8:15 - 12:00 noon).
2. Pregnancy Aid Center - 59 Thompson Street in Raritan - sorting children's clothing. Limited to eight people (9:30 - 12:00 noon).



### 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](mailto:dnann@stmatthias.net)

With you on the journey!

Center for FaithJustice, RENEW International

### ATTENTION SENIORS ~ SAVE THE DATE

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

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





## Give (and Receive!)

| Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 |             |               |                      | Last Year's Total                 |
|---|-------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Current Month   | In-Pew/Mail | Parish Giving | Weekly Total         | Weekly Total                      |
| Week 35 - Mar 5, 2024   | \$13,968.00 | \$14,230.50   | \$28,198.50          | \$36,094.75                       |
| Week 36 - Mar. 12, 2024   |             |               | \$0.00               | \$30,521.25                       |
| Week 37 - Mar. 19, 2024   |             |               | \$0.00               | \$24,352.25                       |
| Week 38 - Mar. 26, 2024   |             |               | \$0.00               | \$20,592.25                       |
|   |             |               | Month-to-date Total  | Mar Total Last Yr                 |
|   |             |               | \$28,198.50          | \$111,560.50                      |
|   |             |               | Current Year-to-date | Year-to-date as of March 31, 2023 |
|   |             |               | \$2,299,083.71       | \$1,052,103.02                    |

### Stewardship Reflection March 10, 2024 4th Sunday of Lent

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..." - John 3:16*

Of all the wonderful gifts that God has given to us, the gift of His own Son is truly the greatest. How can we ever thank God for a gift like that? God does not ask us to sacrifice our own precious firstborn, but He does ask that we are grateful and generous with our God-given gifts. That we nurture and develop our gifts, and in gratitude, generously give back with increase our time in prayer, our talent in charitable works and our treasure to support the mission and ministry of our parish and greater Church.

### Reflexiónese 10 de marzo de 2024 4º Domingo de Cuaresma

*"Tanto amó Dios al mundo, que no dudó en entregarle a su Hijo único..." - Juan 3:16*

De todos los dones maravillosos que Dios nos ha dado, el don de su propio Hijo es verdaderamente el mayor. ¿Cómo podremos agradecerle a Dios por un regalo como ese? Dios no nos pide sacrificar nuestros preciosos primogénitos, pero nos pide que seamos agradecidos y generosos con los dones que hemos recibido de Él. Que cuidemos y desarrollemos nuestros dones, y en gratitud y generosidad los demos de vuelta aumentando nuestro tiempo de oración, nuestro talento en obras de caridad y nuestros tesoros para apoyar la misión y el ministerio de nuestra parroquia, y de la Iglesia en general.



### 2024 Bishop's Annual Appeal

#### STAY WITH US, LORD: Renew our Hearts and Send Us on Mission

Central to our understanding of Christian stewardship is the concept of accountability. To safeguard the gifts you have entrusted to our care, we recently set up a special foundation, a separate trust, where all the money from this Appeal goes so that it can be used only for those ministries advertised in the Appeal materials and website. You can be assured that your gift is well protected and well used; making a difference in meeting the spiritual, educational and social needs of the people we serve. A gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal is a worthy investment.



### IF YOU HAVE NOT SIGNED UP WITH PARISH GIVING...

Most of our contributing parishioners have signed up with our online Parish Giving Program. That has been a big help to the parish in so many ways. If you are one of the few who have not, here's why it is helpful to you and important for St. Matthias: Parish Giving offers secure flexible online giving for our parishioners who would like

to make their donations online using a credit card or bank transfer. You never have to bring cash or checks to church. Giving electronically also helps the church save money and plan the budget. If you want to simplify your life, scan the QR code or go to our website [www.stmatthias.net](http://www.stmatthias.net) and click on the Parish Giving Link under 'Give'. Parish Giving offers you complete control over your account to change your giving as needed. You have the benefit to generate a giving report and easily choose the specific collections you wish to support. We thank you for your support which enables St. Matthias to minister to the community.

# 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](http://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. Email– [UnitedWayTaxPrep@UnitedWayNNJ.org](mailto:UnitedWayTaxPrep@UnitedWayNNJ.org)



## Monday, March 11 WOMEN'S LENTEN AFTERNOON:

### THE BOTTOMLESS WELL OF GOD'S GRACE: A JOURNEY WITH JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Lent is a perfect time to go deeper into the well of our hearts ... and God's heart. During this program, we will break open the Samaritan woman's experience with Jesus at the well (John 4:5-42) and see how our own lives are reflected in hers. As we contemplate Jesus' initial words: "Give me a drink", and allow our own conversation with him to unfold, we will better know who we are and whose we are.

**Presenter: Mary Pollini, 1-3pm at the House of Prayer and on Zoom** \$20-\$30 as you are able.

Information and Registration for all **Mount Saint Mary House of Prayer** offerings can be found on our website: [www.msmhope.org](http://www.msmhope.org).

Call us at 908-753-2091 or email us at [msmhope@msmhope.org](mailto:msmhope@msmhope.org). Registration for all offerings is required 10 days in advance to avoid the program being cancelled. You can register and pay for any program on our website.

## In God's Image Faith Sharing Group, March 13, 2024, 7:00PM, Sacred Heart Church, So. Plainfield, NJ

In God's Image, the Catholic Faith Sharing Group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people at Church of the Sacred Heart, South Plainfield, meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at **7:00PM**. Our next meeting is **March 13<sup>th</sup>** and will be both in person and online.

Please email for more information.

The group is open to LGBTQ adults, 18 and over, and their families. All are welcome for faith sharing, prayer, conversation and support. For more information, contact Fr. John at 908-291-1194 or the group may be reached via email at [sacredheartigi@gmail.com](mailto:sacredheartigi@gmail.com).

## WOMEN OF FAITH

Spend a day of spiritual reflection and renewal with the Sisters and women on the journey.

**April 20, 2024, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

With Rev. Msgr. George Hundt, Pastor,  
St. Gerard Majella, Paterson, New Jersey.

### The day includes:

- Mass
- Conference
- Reconciliation
- Rosary and /or Stations of the Cross

**Eucharistic Adoration Registration Fee: \$15.00**

For more information, contact:

Sr. Alice Ivanyo, MPF [sralicei@gmail.com](mailto:sralicei@gmail.com) or 732-238-9222

## Parish Leadership

|  |  |                         |  |                         |
|--|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Parish Pastoral Council:</b>                              | <b>Co-Secretaries:</b>                                   | <i>Sheila Tartaglia</i> | <b>Parish Finance Council:</b>                       | <i>Cory Panlilio</i>    |
| <b>Co-Chairs:</b>  | Stephen Busono   | Fr. Lancelot McGrath,   | Kester Hector, Chair                                 | Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, |
| Frank Rees   | <a href="mailto:sbusono@gmail.com">sbusono@gmail.com</a> | Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio | <b>Finance Council</b>                               | Ex-Officio              |
| <a href="mailto:Frees814@gmail.com">Frees814@gmail.com</a>   | Bill Isele   |                         | <a href="mailto:@stmatthias.net">@stmatthias.net</a> | Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio |
| Marilyn Wegg   | <a href="mailto:t33sm@aol.com">t33sm@aol.com</a>         | <b>Trustees:</b>        | Carmen Driz-Melilli                                  |                         |
| <a href="mailto:mcw-wam@comcast.net">mcw-wam@comcast.net</a> | Al Drabnis   | Pearl Scott             | Barry Dusault  |                         |
|  | Didi Molano  | Marge Richards          | 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](http://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 8<sup>th</sup> 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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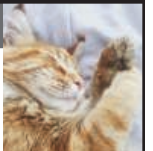
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