Masses
Saturday Eve  5:00PM
Sunday
7:30, 9:00, 10:30AM,
12Noon and 4:30PM
Sunday
7:15, 8:45 AM
Saturday
8:45 AM

Pastoral Team
Pastor
Father Chuck Romano
Associate Pastor
Father Frank Eisele
Father James Isabakaki
Deacons
Deacon Robert C. Campbell, OFS
Deacon Thomas Wm. Connolly, T.O Carm
Deacon Guy Donza
Deacon Thomas J. Malone Jr., S.F.D.
Pastoral Associate, Youth & Parish Social Ministry
Deacon Richard W. LaRossa, S.F.D.
School Principal
Sr. Ruthanne Gypalo, I.H.M.
Director of Religious Education
Mrs. Evelyn Contaldi
Business Manager
Thomas J. Donovan
South Nassau Hospital Chaplain
Father Sylvester Ikela

Parish Staff
Music Ministry  Folk Group
Laura Garbitelli  AnnMarie Lynch
Children's Choir
Patricia Mayle
Hand Bell Choir
Se-beng Koh
Plant Manager
Steve Bennett
Parish Secretary
Annamarie Reilly
Bulletin Editor
Pauline Birmingham

The Parish of
St. Raymond
A Eucharistic Community of
Faith, Love and Friendship

Sunday, December 20, 2015

December 20, 2015
Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 25, 2015
The Nativity of the Lord
Welcome To Our Parish Family!
Not registered? Please stop by our rectory during office hours to be included in our parish family.

Rectory
Office Hours are Monday—Friday from 9:00am - 5:00pm; Saturday from 9:30am - 1:00pm
Please call ahead for an appointment.

Telephone Numbers
Rectory…………………………………………………….593-5000
Rectory Fax……………………………………………….887-0554
St. Raymond School……………………………………593-9010
St. Raymond School Fax……………………………..593-0986
Religious Education Office……………………………..593-9075
Religious Education Office Fax………………………593-1156
Parish Social Ministry…………………………………887-9197
Parish Social Ministry Fax……………………………..593-6278

Web Site: www.SaintRaymonds.org
E-Mail: StRayRcc@optonline.net

Pastoral Care Of The Sick
Holy Communion— Available to the homebound; call rectory.

Devotions
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Thursdays from 1:00-4:00pm in Our Lady’s Chapel.
Nocturnal Adoration
First Fridays from 8:00-9:00pm.
Miraculous Medal Novena
Saturdays following 8:45am Mass.

Confessions
Saturdays from 3:30-4:30pm, or by appointment.

Baptisms
Baptisms are celebrated the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Please call the Rectory for an appointment.

Bereavement Support Group
Call the rectory office for meeting times.

Marriages
Engaged couples are encouraged to call the Rectory a year in advance of their wedding date to assure adequate time to participate in preparation programs for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Prayer Groups
Charismatic Prayer Group: Every Tuesday at 7:30pm in the rectory lower level (MWMR).
Men’s Prayer Group: Every 4th Friday at 8:00pm in Our Lady’s Chapel.

Music Ministries
Children’s Choir: Sings at the 9:00 Mass on the 3rd Sunday of the month from September through June, and meets for practice every Tuesday at 5:00pm in the school auditorium.
Choir (Adult): Sings at 10:30am Mass on Sunday from September—June, and meets for practice on Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm in the church.
Folk Group: Sings at 12 Noon Mass on Sundays from September through June, and meets for practice on Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm in the rectory basement.
Hand Bell Choir: Plays at the 5:00pm Mass on the last Saturday of the month from September through June, and meets for practice on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm in the church.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
Interested in becoming a Catholic or an adult Catholic seeking Eucharist or Confirmation? Call the rectory and ask for Deacon Rich LaRossa.

This Week in Our Parish

Monday, December 21st
1:00pm: Human Life Committee Meeting MWMR
7:30pm: RCIA Class MWMR

Tuesday, December 22nd
7:30pm: Charismatic Prayer Group MWMR

Wednesday, December 23rd
7:30pm: Adult Choir Practice Church
7:30pm: Folk Group Practice MWMR

Saturday, December 26th
3:30pm—4:30pm: Confessions Church

Early Bulletin Deadline!
Due to the New Year’s Day holiday, there is an early deadline for the January 3rd Bulletin:
Articles are due by Monday, Dec. 21st by 5:00pm.

Please email your articles to: StRayRCC@optonline.net
Please put “Bulletin Article” in the subject line.
—Thank you!

Collection Envelopes/Checks/Cash
To insure the accuracy and efficiency of the recording of your weekly offering, please indicate the amount of your offering on the front of your envelope, as well as write your envelope number on the front of your check. And please do not tape or staple the contents or envelope flap.
Thank you!

Ushers Needed!
We are in need of Ushers at several of our Masses. Please consider giving a little of your time to this important ministry!
If you can help us, please contact Tom at: 516-887-9401 or tnacki@optonline.net

What Once Was Lost, Now Is Found!
Are you missing a hat, an earring, or maybe your reading glasses? Can’t find your Rosary Beads? Misplaced your cane? Don’t want to tell your spouse you’ve lost your wedding band? Are you climbing through your basement window because you can’t find your house keys? Or maybe you’re hot-wiring your car every morning because you can’t find your car keys? Is your friend wondering why she never saw you wearing those nice leather gloves she bought you for Christmas?
If so, stop by the Altar Servers’ Sacristy in the Church to see if your long lost item is in our Lost & Found box.
Greetings and God’s Happy Advent Blessings on the Fourth Sunday of Advent! We have reached the fourth and final week of preparation before the grand celebration of Christmas. As we all are caught up with the busyness of getting ready for Christmas, it is still important to let the richness of the scriptures and their themes take precedence in our spiritual preparation. The first reading from Micah shows a return to Bethlehem as the birthplace of hope. “You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah,...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be the ruler in Israel.....” Then in Hebrews, the submissive will of Jesus is worth more than any burnt offering. “Behold, I come to do your will.” And then in Luke’s gospel, two expectant mothers share the joy of trusting in God beyond all reason. “Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

Something in the human spirit rejoices in the come-from-behind victory. We cheer for the underdog Rocky of the movies. We delight in knowing that Einstein was a lousy student in school, that a lot of saints were all but rejected by seminaries or convents. We love the log cabin to Oval Office backgrounds of some presidents. We want the kid who grew up in the orphanage to become the millionaire owner of a successful hamburger chain. We want success to smile on those deemed losers from the start. So how can we not root for Bethlehem? It’s a real long shot place to be a real player in world history. This “house of bread” was a farming district five miles from Jerusalem. Without David’s roots there and rise to fame, Bethlehem would have remained simply a barley field. We might also raise a cheer for Nazareth, a town so humble of nature that the locals would sneer at Jesus. Actually all of Israel is a rather insignificant corner of the Near East. Yet we care about Israel and Bethlehem and Nazareth. We care about the widow Ruth and David and Elizabeth who is nobody.

And of course with Mary we have a pregnant, unmarried young girl whose plight would spell certain poverty and obscurity; if not a short life! Yet one day soon all future generations would call Mary blessed, and she would arguably become the most famous, celebrated and influential woman in history. This simple “Visitation” between two women would become a frequently reproduced work of art. Out of the irrelevance of these two, written off by any sane person in their communities, the great hope of humanity springs. When it comes to salvation history, never count someone out of the story—including yourself!

Last Sunday we enjoyed a wonderful Gaudete Sunday celebration for the Third Sunday of Advent! Our Family Mass with the Children’s Choir gave us a stirring start to the day. Our outdoor crèche was blessed after Mass and then the festivities of Hospitality Sunday took over. And all throughout the Masses generous parishioners came by with their Giving Tree gifts for Parish Social Ministry. The Sodality of Our Lady kept us all well fed with goodies galore. The sweet smell of Christmas wafted through the cafeteria as people came by to pick-up their Christmas Plants. And during hospitality, the drama mounted as the Christmas Cash 50/50 kept growing and growing. Finally at 2pm we reached $10,200.00 at which time the winning chance was pulled. It was #E03899 which netted the winner $5,100.00. The day wasn’t over yet as many parishioners and friends convened in our church at 7pm to be treated to the Lessons and Carols Service by our Adult Choir. It was a fitting way to end the day and spring forth spiritually into the final weeks of Advent. Thanks to all who participated in any or all parts of Gaudete Sunday! Joy was really in the air!

Please remember to take home a copy of the bulletin when you leave Mass this weekend. It contains many items of interest and invitation, with something for everyone. Of special note is news and needs from Parish Social Ministry, info from Religious Education and the Principal’s Corner of St. Raymond School, the upcoming week’s extra Sacrament of Reconciliation times, the Mass Schedule for Christmas through New Year’s Day, envelope usage for the Christmas Masses of Remembrance and much more. To keep informed, keep a copy of the bulletin at home each week for quick and easy reference.

Have a great Fourth Week of Advent! Don’t forget to share, smile and love as this week’s theme indicates. And tell me: What goes Oh! Oh! Oh? Answer: Santa walking backwards. Merry Christmas and God bless always.

—Father Chuck
Principal’s Corner

“Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.” There are just five more days before we celebrate the birth of the Savior of the world. Our God loves us so much that He gifted us with His Son. This Christmas let us remember to take time to thank Him for His generous love.

Merry Christmas from our St. Raymond School Family to all!

This is another shortened week for our children at St. Raymond School. Needless to say, the excitement and anticipation are oozing from every part of the building. The Christmas Concert and Tableau are over and the hours to the break and arrival of Christmas are being counted with great joy. However, there are still two and a half days left before we close the doors for the holiday. Here’s a look at our schedule for this week:

- Monday – Grade 4 to morning Mass; LIRR safety assemblies in the morning; Baked ziti; Student Council meeting at lunchtime; NO chorus after school
- Tuesday – Grade 3 to morning Mass; Enterprise for Grades 4; Deli sandwiches; Spirit Team home game with St. William’s at 3:30 and 4:45pm
- Wednesday – School Mass at 8:45am hosted by the 7th grade; Enterprise for Grade 6; Dismissal at 11:30am for Christmas break

Thanks to everyone who reached out to help others during this special Advent season. Whether you made a donation to the missions, made a card for our soldiers, put a gift at the “Giving Tree” or said a special prayer for those in need, we appreciate you. God bless you for your kindness to others.

Please note that school will be closed from Dec. 23rd through Jan. 4th. If there is any reason to contact us, please leave a message on our voice mail and we will return your call in a timely manner. Have a safe vacation and a blessed Christmas.

Religious Education - Faith Formation

There are Religion classes on Monday, Dec. 21st and Tuesday, Dec. 22nd. There are no Religious Education classes from Wednesday, Dec. 23rd -Thursday, Dec. 31st. The Religious Education office will be closed during that time as well. Religious Education classes will resume and the office will re-open on Monday, Jan. 4th, 2016.

Attention 2nd Grade Religious Education & St. Raymond School Parents:

Our next children’s Mass will be celebrated on Epiphany Sunday, Jan. 3rd, 2016 at 9:00am. The second grade girls and boys will participate as ‘hosts’ for this Mass. Don’t forget to pick up their “star” from Mrs. Contaldi at the center break of the church before Mass begins. Please plan on coming to this very special Mass with your family.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” - Luke 2:14

May you have the spirit of Christmas which is peace, the gladness of Christmas which is hope and the heart of Christmas which is love. Wishing you and your loved ones all the wonder and magic of Christmas.

Mrs. Evelyn Contaldi, Mrs. Terry Leonetti, Mrs. Lucy Ostermann

St. Raymond Human Life Committee

Spiritual Adoption Program
Six Month Developing Baby

Although your spiritually adopted baby is growing rapidly, your baby's organs are still developing. His or her skin is bright pink, covered with a heavy protective creamy ointment “vernix”. His or her eyelids separate, eyelashes form and the eyes are partially opened. The baby's weight is about two pounds. Any baby born at this time has a very good chance of surviving. Today, medical advances in caring for extremely small newborn infants are extraordinary. About nine out of ten babies now will survive with intensive care services.

As this child is being formed by our loving God, please continue to be faithful in your prayers for him or her, so that the baby's parents will choose life for their little one. Remember, the taking of innocent life in the womb through abortion is legal in America, up to and including, the ninth month of pregnancy, for any reason.

Next monthly meeting:
Monday, Dec. 21st, 1:00 - 2:30pm
Msgr. Walsh Meeting Room, rectory lower level.

St. Raymond Human Life Committee

We wish all a very Blessed & Merry Christmas!
Stewardship Thought for the Week

The Gospel today tells of the Virgin Mary, pregnant herself, hurrying off to help her cousin Elizabeth. The model of good stewardship, she who had given herself to bear the Savior gave her time and love to others as well.

Sacrificial Giving:
December 13, 2015: $17,123
December 14, 2014: $17,167

Monthly sharing with:
Bishop Cardone and his mission work in the Solomon Islands: $150

The search is underway for...
Longest Married Couple in the U.S.A. !
Sponsored by the Worldwide Marriage Encounter
Do you think you know who they are? Maybe it’s your parents or your grandparents? That nice couple who live down the street? Nominating a couple is easy; just send their names, wedding date and where they live and your contact information to: wwmelmc2015@gmail.com
Nominations accepted until January 10, 2016.
Winners will be announced February 2016 to celebrate World Marriage Day.

Parish Social Ministry

We, at Parish Social Ministry, wish all a joyful Christmas. May you experience the birth of Christ with the innocent heart of a child!

Thank you to all who participated in the Giving Tree and Sponsor-a-Family Programs. Someone in our parish is thankful for your kindness and generosity and we are thankful to God for your contributions always!

God Bless & Merry Christmas to all!

Parish Social Ministry will be closing Wednesday, Dec. 23rd at 3pm and Reopening on Monday, Jan. 4th at 10am.

Mission News

When we travel to Guatemala, we spend the majority of our time staying at the home of Adrian and Tomasa Cochoy. Traveler after traveler comments on the love and hospitality they feel in the Cochoy house. In this special season of Christmas we thank God for the love these two wonderful people extend to us and to the people of Santa Lucia, Guatemala.

Invitation Home

Feel free to invite those Catholics who have been away from the Church and the Sacraments to visit the website www.catholicscomehome.org.

Credit Union Supports St. Raymond!

St. Raymond has received a total of $9,664 in donations from the Oceanside Christopher Federal Credit Union Parish Revenue Sharing Program. The amount donated every quarter is determined by member parishioners usage of Oceanside Christopher VISA Credit and/or Debit Card. So I want to especially thank each of you—your credit card usage benefits our parish and that’s great! Oceanside Christopher is a financial cooperative that is owned and operated by the Catholic community. If you are not a member you are encouraged to join and help this ongoing donation increase.

Visit their branch at 45 Atlantic Ave. in Oceanside, or for information call 620-8100, or visit their website at: www.thecatholiccreditunion.org.

Pastoral Council

The Fourth Candle
The “Candle of Love” symbolizes Christ’s love.
God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because He loves us!
John 3:16-17

Pastoral Council Members
Liz Tortorella, Chairperson; Monica Collins, Vice Chairperson; Michaelene Cooper; Regina Dee; Michael Palumbo; Patricia Mayle; Mary Murphy, Secretary; Raymond Solga; Irene Villacci;
A Special Invitation...

“Do you realize that Jesus is there in the Blessed Sacrament expressly for you, for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart!”

St. Theresa of Lisieux

The greatest gift that God has left for us is Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. Here at St. Raymond we have the privilege of time set aside each Thursday from 1:00-4:00pm in Our Lady’s Chapel to be before the Lord in Adoration. It is a time to escape from worldly things and sit quietly in silence or personal prayer from your heart. It is a time to bring to the Lord all your cares and worries, as well as thank Him for His blessings. Time before the Lord in Adoration gives peace and serenity that is difficult to explain. “Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,” St. Alphonsus Ligouri tells us, “consoles a soul far beyond what the world can offer.”

Please join us on Thursdays, for whatever amount of time you can spend, as Pope St. John XXIII has said, “There is no doubt that a flood of graces will descend upon you and your family and the world if more souls would become docile pupils of adoration.” Children young and old are more than welcome, so stop by after school.

“Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is the best time you will spend on earth.”

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Support Catholic Charities by Shopping...

AmazonSmile.com

We are happy to announce that Catholic Charities, Diocese of Rockville Centre is now a registered charity with AmazonSmile. As you may know, AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that allows customers to enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that now when you shop on AmazonSmile (amazonsmile.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases back to Catholic Charities to help us to continue to offer you support and to support the many services we offer.

When you first visit the AmazonSmile site, when prompted, you must select Catholic Charities Diocese of Rockville Centre as the charitable organization you wish to support and then you may begin to shop. Please use AmazonSmile and encourage friends and family to do so as well!

St. Raymond R.C. Church

Page 4

St. Raymond Memorials

Often people ask if there is something they could memorialize in memory of a loved one. Besides having Mass Intentions, there are other opportunities for individuals, families and groups to remember a loved one in a tangible and sometimes lasting way. Some of the weekly liturgical memorials that we have are the Bread and Wine, the Rose for Life and the Sanctuary Lamp. These memorials can be arranged at the rectory.

There are also other liturgical items that are seasonal, like the Christmas and Easter Flowers, the Paschal Candle, Advent Wreath Candles and other holy items we can use for religious services. Then we also have a certain lasting type of memorial called a "Memorial Brick" that can be set in one of four beautiful outside locations. One location is by the Holy Family Statue on the front lawn of the rectory, the St. Teresa Statue behind the rectory, the God and Country Memorial near the front of the church and finally our newest Padre Pio Statue on the walkway between the rectory and church. Each location is open for anyone wishing to have such a Memorial Brick placed there.

These bricks are 4” by 8” with up to three lines of text. The donation for each brick is $250. Anyone wishing to purchase one of these bricks should contact the rectory during regular office hours. Maybe you will consider one of these special places on the grounds of St. Raymond to celebrate life and pay tribute to someone dear to you.

Families Anonymous

Families Anonymous (FA) is a Twelve-Step support program of recovery for relatives and friends concerned about the use of drugs, alcohol or related behavioral problems. We meet every Wednesday at 7:30pm in St. Raymond's School cafeteria.

For more information, call Antoinette at 568-0040. www.FamiliesAnonymous.org

Diocese of Rockville Centre

The Office for the Protection of Children & Young People

Please Remember... We are all responsible for the safety of children and vulnerable adults! If you suspect mistreatment of a child or vulnerable adult by any member of the Clergy, Church Employee or Volunteer:

Phone the Hotline to make a report: 516-594-9063

All appropriate steps will be taken to protect the reputation and privacy of those involved: the person making the complaint, the victim and the accused. For more information on the Charter for the Protection of Children/ Young People visit the Diocesan Website and click on Protecting God’s Children Tab.
Do you enjoy singing at home?

The St. Raymond Adult Choir
Invites you to sing in God's house!

"He who sings, prays twice!" St. Augustine

Come and join us as we sing and pray together during the 10:30am Mass on Sundays!

No Audition Required!

Choir rehearsals are held every Wednesday from 7:30-9:30pm in the Church Choir Loft.

Why not come to a choir rehearsal and see what we are about?

For more information, leave a message for Choir Director, Laura Garbitelli at the Rectory office, 593-5000.

Help us keep the bells ringing...
Come join St. Raymond’s Hand Bell Choir!

Practice: Thursdays from 7:30pm-9:30pm
Play: Once a month at the Saturday 5:00pm Mass.

Some musical experience required.
For more info, please call 887-1152.

Come & Join the..
Children’s Choir!
...at St. Raymond Church
Children in grades ONE through SIX are invited to join the Children’s Choir.
Children in grades FOUR through SIX may sign up to become a Junior Cantor.

Practices held in St. Raymond’s School Auditorium on Tuesdays from 5pm – 6pm.

For more information, call Pat Mayle, Director:
Home: 516-837-3499 or Cell: 516-662-4772

Do you like to sing?
Do you play piano, flute or guitar?

Check out...
St. Raymond’s Folk Group!
If your in 7th to 12th Grade, we would love to have you join us!

We rehearse on Wednesday nights at 7:30pm in the Rectory Lower Level and sing at the 12 Noon Sunday Masses.
For more information, call AnnMarie Lynch at 599-6836
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

Christ is born: sing glory! Christ has descended from heaven: go out to meet Him! Christ is on earth: lift yourselves up! Sing to the Lord, all the earth; for He who belongs to heaven is now on earth!

With these words, the fourth century theologian, St. Gregory Nazianzen (+389) proclaimed the Christmas message that is as true today as it was from that first moment in Bethlehem when the Blessed Mother Mary brought her son Jesus into the world. Since that night we, like Gregory and all others who know Jesus, have exulted in the gift of the Son of God made man. His birth heralds the defeat of sin and death. His presence among us, like us in all things but sin, shines the bright promise of God’s merciful love on our faces and into our hearts. Who does not rejoice to know that God so loved the world that He sent His Son?

Which one of us would turn away from this blessed scene of the Virgin with Joseph in the Bethlehem stable offering the Child to us so that all humankind can be saved? How can we do anything but sing Glory to God with the angels and bend low in adoration with the shepherds. This night we all become free! This night we all are one. This night we see the salvation of our God.

My dear friends, this has not been an easy year for any of us, for our families, for our parishes, for our nation, for the world. The forces of darkness are strong and determined. Terrorism seems to be widening its sweep and too many of our leaders seem unsure of what must be done to protect society and care for the suffering. Too many families are struggling to make ends meet. Too many youth in our midst are led astray by the false gods of drugs, alcohol and momentary pleasures. Freedom is under attack at home and abroad. Many look in all the wrong places for answers that hurt rather than help.

We have the right answer. We all need Christmas. We all need Jesus. We all need Mary. God has given HIS answer to the world, an answer that overcomes all its tragedies and all its temptations. God’s response to our cries is clear and unequivocal: His Son! Yes: Jesus Christ, His Son! He is God’s answer to our cries. He is God’s gift for our lives. He breaks down the barriers, for the name of peace is Jesus Christ. He is Our Peace! And He and He alone can calm our fears, renew our strength, lift up our hearts and give joy to our lives!

Yes, my friends, this Christmas go out to meet Him; lift up your hearts; Sing for joy. For all humankind has seen the salvation of our God! A blessed and Joyous Christmas to you all!

William Murphy
Bishop of Rockville Centre

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**CHRISTMAS MASSES OF REMEMBRANCE**

Many people like to request the intention for a Mass on Christmas Day. Since there are a limited number of Masses for Christmas, all requests are not able to be fulfilled. Therefore, there will be a special Novena of Masses for Christmas that will be the **Christmas Masses of Remembrance**. Those whom you would like will be remembered at all the Masses during the Christmas season.

Special envelopes have been mailed with the regular envelope packet and in the Christmas mailing to all parishioners. They are also available on the front side pews and on the back pews by the doors of the church. Simply fill out the intention you wish to have remembered on the front of the envelope, include your donation and either mail it back, drop it in the Sunday Mass collection or place it in one of the wooden boxes marked “Christmas Masses.” Please do so by Thursday, Dec. 24th. Thank you.

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**Christmas 2015**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

Christ is born: sing glory! Christ has descended from heaven: go out to meet Him! Christ is on earth: lift yourselves up! Sing to the Lord, all the earth; for He who belongs to heaven is now on earth!

With these words, the fourth century theologian, St. Gregory Nazianzen (+389) proclaimed the Christmas message that is as true today as it was from that first moment in Bethlehem when the Blessed Mother Mary brought her son Jesus into the world. Since that night we, like Gregory and all others who know Jesus, have exulted in the gift of the Son of God made man. His birth heralds the defeat of sin and death. His presence among us, like us in all things but sin, shines the bright promise of God’s merciful love on our faces and into our hearts. Who does not rejoice to know that God so loved the world that He sent His Son?

Which one of us would turn away from this blessed scene of the Virgin with Joseph in the Bethlehem stable offering the Child to us so that all humankind can be saved? How can we do anything but sing Glory to God with the angels and bend low in adoration with the shepherds. This night we all become free! This night we all are one. This night we see the salvation of our God.

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William Murphy
Bishop of Rockville Centre
Fourth Week of Advent
The season of Wait...
By Joan Blandin Howard

Today’s Liturgy of the Word opens with the Song of Songs, deemed by many to be the most beautiful love song ever written. It is a poetic song delightful to the ear and visually enticing. Both the lover and the beloved sing of true love’s longing. Each sings of the anticipated joy at the prospect of being together. But, they must wait. It is not yet time. The beloved is hidden, “...in the secret recesses...”. The lover pleads, “...let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and you are lovely.” The song is of earthy joy, longing and desire. The lovers can hardly contain themselves. The longing in Wait. The gospel story is a mirror image of the love song. It is the love story that exists among Mary, her older cousin Elizabeth and the babies they carry, Jesus and John the Baptist.

Just imagine the young girl Mary running through the hill country on her way to be with Elizabeth whose baby is due. Elizabeth’s time of joyful expectancy nears fulfillment. Elizabeth has waited many long years for her promised child. Mary, young and newly pregnant is full of Love and joyful expectation. She has only months not years in wait for her fulfillment. Imagine their greeting - sweet tears of joy running down their cheeks. Their mutual longing is gratified. The delights in Wait.

The Love Mary carries blesses Elizabeth who is “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Elizabeth cannot suppress the thrill she feels “... the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears my infant leaped for joy”. Elizabeth reverently sings the praises of Mary and the infant she carries. “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” In their sisterly confidences there is unbridled joy in the midst of longing and waiting. They dwell in the fullness of wait for the fulfillment of the promise.

The love song and the love story are lived experiences of joy, longing and desire – the lived experience of Wait. The season of Wait, the experience of Wait(ing) is not merely in preparation for something or someone. Wait is its own season. Wait has a fullness, a significance, a meaning of its own. Witness the joy and desire in Waiting. Waiting itself is a rich experience. It is not always a joyful time, can be challenging, but always a rich time. There is a fullness and identity in the Wait. Waiting is not just a preparation time prior to some thing happening – life or death, but a gift in itself – to be held, relished. The Wait that Mary and Elizabeth share, the Wait of the lovers, the Wait of expectant parents, the Wait of Mary and Joseph. The Wait shared between the expectant mother and the infant she carries.

In these last few days of Advent, of Wait, as preparation and anticipation begin to mount, what is God offering me? What is it within my unique intimate relationship with the Lord that God wants me to receive, to enjoy, to savor? What have been the gifts, the graces, the blessings of this year’s Wait?
Masses for this Week

Monday, December 21st  St. Peter Canisius
7:15am Philip Luczia Curra
8:45am Edward Shalhoub—Living

Tuesday, December 22nd
7:15am Bruno Kaelin
8:45am Gus Martucciello

Wednesday, December 23rd  St. John of Kanty
7:15am Frances Hess
8:45am Augustino & Carmela Esposito

Thursday, December 24th  Eve of the Nativity of the Lord
7:15am Francisca Martinez
8:45am The Cassese Family—Living & Deceased Members
5:00pm Muldowney & Venis Families
8:00pm Herb Mogensen—30th Anniversary
11:00pm Dave Brand

Friday, December 25th  The Nativity of the Lord
9:00am Fred & Agnes Villacci
10:30am Edward O’Reilly
12:00pm The Cassese Family—Living & Deceased Members

Saturday, December 26th  St. Stephen
8:45am Audrey Walsh, Jack Butler, Joan Finn
5:00pm William Hartt

Sunday, December 27th  The Feast of the Holy Family
7:30am Marge Carinci
9:00am Joanne Cicero
10:30am Cheryl Drugan
12:00pm Michael Horn, Joseph Clancy, Rose O’Connor, Joseph Migliaccio, Cheryl Ruppel, Clare Oakes,
4:30am People of the Parish

Scripture Readings for the Week

Monday
Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Lk 1:39-45

Tuesday
1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56

Wednesday
Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Lk 1:57-66

Thursday
Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Lk 1:67-70
Night: Is 9:1-6/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14
Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20
Day: Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Saturday
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Mt 10:17-22

Sunday
Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24/ Lk 2:41-52

Please Pray for Our Sick

Names are printed for 3 weeks unless the rectory is notified otherwise.

Rest in Peace
Fernando Negrino
Kathleen Scire

The Altar Bread & Wine...
for this week is in memory of
The Mahoney & Turtola Families

The Sanctuary Lamp...
for this week is in memory of
The Raia Family
From Diane Minucci

The Rose for Life...
for this week is in memory of
Louis Perri
Donated by Eleanor Perri & Family.
For future dedications, call Mary Healy at 887-4062.

Please keep our Service Men & Women in Prayer...
Capt. Kathryn M. Costello, U.S.M.C., Recruit Joseph R. Diltz, USMC,
Lance Corp. Sean M. Donohue, U.S.M.C., Lt., Gregory Durso, U.S.ARMY,
Pvt. Brian Efferen, U.S.M.C., Sgt. John David Efferen, U.S.M.C.,
Corp. Daniel J. Ferrato, U.S.M.C., Lt. Joseph Garbitelli, U.S.NAVY,
LCpl. Yonik Gomez USMC, Michael Gondek, National Guard,
John C. Hayes, U.S. ARMY,
Lance Corporal Dylan J. Hickam, U.S.M.C.
Lt. Col. Mary P. King, M.D., U.S.ARMY,
PFC Brian Lantz, U.S. ARMY, Lt. Joseph Leahy, U.S.N.,
Capt. Joseph McQuade, U.S.N., Lt. Jake Murphy, U.S.ARMY,
Capt. Brian Peterson, USAF, Capt. Graham A. Perry, U.S.M.C.,
Lt. Roy Ragusa, Jr., U.S. ARMY,
Lt. Kevin Reilly, U.S. ARMY, Lt. Cmdr., Capt. Kimberly Russo, National Guard,
Andrew Schimenti, U.S.N., SO2 Craig T. Smith, USN

Please remember to pray for our wounded soldiers.
Help the Poor in the Appalachia Mountains
Deep in the Appalachian Mountains, an area hard hit by the loss of coal jobs, many are forced to leave while the elderly are forced to face the struggle. St. Stephen Church, distributes food, clothes, household items, cleaning materials and sanitary items to as many families as possible. We assist with heating and utility bills for those unable to pay them. Poverty in the area is increasing and our funds are all but exhausted. This is why we are asking for your generous help to keep this outreach program going. Any donation large or small will be a blessing and greatly appreciated.

Kindly send donations to:
St. Stephen Catholic Church Outreach
304 Central Ave.
Cumberland, KY 40823
Att: Fr. Mani George Thellikalayil (Ph: 606-509-5616)

Volunteer missionaries for home repairs welcomed and greatly appreciated!

May God forever bless you;
whatever you do for the poor will be a treasure in heaven!

Sacred Heart Academy
Alumnae Career Symposium
Sunday, Jan. 10th; 11am—2pm
Sacred Heart Academy Alumnae are invited to attend this professional experience designed to provide alumnae and upper-class women with additional tools to succeed in today's marketplace. Attendees will participate in workshops and presentations that focus on both personal and career development. No cost to alumnae. For details: alumnae@sacredheartacademyhempstead.org

Blankets Warming Hearts

Our Mission: To bring warmth, cheer, and a sense of community to the residents and patients at local hospitals, nursing homes and rehabilitation centers during this holiday season.

How Can You Help? By donating store-bought or homemade blankets (newly done). Lap or throw size are perfect! Blankets will be packaged and personalized with a “donor card” stating the donor’s name and well wishes.

Cathy Turner’s on-going battle with Multiple Sclerosis is the catalyst behind Blankets Warming Hearts. Her stay at a local hospital during the 2009 holiday season exposed her first hand to the heartache of being separated from your family at this most joyous time. Without the help and kindness of others, that holiday season and her everyday life would be much difficult. Blankets Warming Hearts is Cathy’s way of thanking you all and continuing to pay it forward.

Please send donations to: Blankets Warming Hearts,
14 Denton Ave., East Rockaway, NY 11518.

Questions? email Cathy at: blanketswarminghearts@gmail.com

Employment Opportunity
A western Nassau parish has a part-time position available for a secretary/receptionist. Knowledge of Microsoft Publisher and Word is required. Please call: Catherine at 766-0205
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