Happy Easter!

Letter from the Finance Council — please read the letter on page 4.

Special Collections this Weekend:
- St. Vincent DePaul Society (Holy Thursday)
- Holy Land (Good Friday)
- Easter (Vigil/Sunday)

 Forgiveness of Sins:
No individual confession can be offered at this time. Please read the letter from Fr. Abraham on “Options in the Absence of Confession” on page 4.

Join Us for Mass & Holy Week Services Online
Please go to (and subscribe to) our YouTube channel, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcxxG9GV_zJAIgQxctO7Bdgw, or you may click on the blue tab on our website, to celebrate Mass with us during Holy Week and every Sunday until we can gather again in the church.

We will celebrate the Triduum and Easter together as one community, since our services will be live-streamed. No need to reserve seats or to come early, since we will have enough room for EVERYONE to participate together at the same time (from your home)! The song sheets and other resources will be available on our website at http://www.stmatthias.net/connect/Resources, so please sing with us!!!

The Triduum and Easter Sunday’s mass will be live-streamed at the following times:
- Holy Thursday — 7:30 PM
- Good Friday — 3 PM
- Easter Vigil on Saturday night — 8 PM
- Easter Sunday Mass — 10 AM

Subscribe to “St. Matthias Family Connect”
Stay connected by subscribing to our new e-letter called “St. Matthias Family Connect”. We currently have over 1,600 subscribers. Go to our website www.stmatthias.net and click on the blue tab to sign up.

This short e-letter will help us stay connected as one parish and school community, as well as provide important news. Check our website to read the latest issue.
From the Pastor’s Desk

Dear Friends, Happy Easter!

But wait a minute, can we really wish and mean it this year? Is it truly a ‘happy’ Easter? So much gloom around us. Fear and anxiety are our constant companions. How long will we have to put up with this misery? All these and other worrisome questions and situations will not take away the meaning of Easter that we are celebrating today. Why do I say so?

Easter is a feast of surprise. Nobody expected Jesus to rise from the dead – not the crowd who followed him, not the enemies who crucified him, not even his closest disciples to whom he had predicted a couple of times that he would rise again on the third day! (Matthew 12:28-32; 17:23; John 2:19-23). It was such an impossibility in the mind of the apostles, that when the women told them that Jesus had risen from the dead, they thought these women were talking in delirium, as Luke 24:11 implies: “But they [the disciples] did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.” They did not believe even the eyewitnesses who told them that Jesus had risen! (Mark 16:13; John 20:9).

But they finally believed when Jesus himself appeared to them. It was a total surprise that brought them joy and hope. Aren’t we already happily surprised that even though we grieve the loss of our cherished and unique St. Matthias Holy Week/Triduum practices (touching the cross – just to name one), we are discovering the benefits of the same sacramental life online? Aren’t we happily surprised that we can still be connected to our church through the virtual Holy Mass? Aren’t we happily surprised that all our Live Lent! Groups and other committees and associations have been meeting via zoom or other video/phone conference tools? Aren’t we happily surprised that even though the school building had to be closed, our students are having remote learning?

Yes, Easter is a feast of happy surprise. Yes we can certainly wish each other Happy Easter! It brings us the promise of hope and a joyful anticipation that we shall overcome these dark times. Christ’s own victory over sin and death is a guarantee for our own liberation from all fears and the pandemic itself. Let us continue all our efforts in cooperating with the directives from our government and health department. Let us not forget to salute the heroic services of all those who are in the forefront of this war against the coronavirus, especially all in the medical profession, the scientists, disease experts and all other collaborators, as well as all those who are helping us with the essential services for our regular life.

Yes, Happy Easter! May the Risen Lord’s blessings be with all.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal

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View Our Calendar:
for the most up-to-date schedule of events/times — www.stmatthias.net/connect/calendar

No Individual Confessions:
***Please read the important letter from Fr. Abraham on “Options in the Absence of Confession” on page 4.

Watch Our New Music Ministry YouTube Channel
See the box on page 7 and enjoy our music.

“UPLIFT” Facebook Group
Visit our new St. Matthias Facebook group called “UPLIFT — Uniting People Linked in Faith Together”, to hear and share uplifting stories and photos during these challenging times. http://www.facebook.com/groups/1059598504399215

Buildings Closed, but Offices Open (remotely):
Our Parish Office and School are open “remotely. You may reach us via email, or leave a phone message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Church Building
Following the lead of the diocese, and with utmost concern for the safety of all parishioners, our church building will be closed on Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday. We invite you to pray and participate with us online.

For the times when the church building will be open for individual prayer on other days, please always check our online “Calendar” (on the orange bar) on our website. If you are not feeling well, please stay home and join us in prayer remotely. If you decide to come, please practice social distancing and stay at least 6 feet away from others. Also, bring hand wipes so you can wipe anything you touch — the pew where you sat, the top of the pew in front of you, the door handles, etc. It is not possible for us to do this in between personal visits. Thank you for helping to keep others safe.
**Readings for the Week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Acts 2:14, 22-33; 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11; Mt 28:18-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Acts 2:36-41; Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20 and 22; Jn 20:1-18</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Acts 3:1-10; Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9; Lk 24:13-35</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Acts 3:11-26; Ps 8:2ab, 5, 6-7, 8-9; Lk 24:35-48</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Acts 4:13-21; Ps 118:1, 14-15ab, 16-18, 19-21; Mk 16:9-15</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Acts 2:42-47; Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24; 1 Pt 1:3-9; Jn 20:19-31</td>
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**Mass Intentions for the Week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Vigil</td>
<td>Al Maglio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
<td>8:00AM</td>
<td>Susan Manansala</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Lourdes Maniego</td>
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<td>15, 16</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>Lucy Mims</td>
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<td>Eleanor Morehouse</td>
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<td>Ursula Morgenbergen</td>
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<td>Dave Moynihan</td>
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<td>Patricia (Pat) Nese</td>
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<td>Margaret O’Hare</td>
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<td>Danny Onchangco</td>
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<td>Mafalda Parafiorili</td>
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<td>Bernadine Pasternak</td>
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<td>Lou Rimblas</td>
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<td>Easter</td>
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<td>Maria Schwenzer</td>
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<td>Sr. Mary Amata Shina, OSF</td>
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<td>Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF</td>
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<td>Christine Szczepanski</td>
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<td>Mona Wilson</td>
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<td>Edward Yeager</td>
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<td>Sr. Jessy, OSF</td>
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**Pray for those who are sick...**

If you or a family member are sick, please email Kelly Counts at kcounts@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.

- Rosemarie Aulino
- Anthony Driz & Family
- Al Maglio
- Brian Reyes
- Maria Schwenzer
- Sr. Mary Amata Shina, OSF
- Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF
- Dennis Stuewe
- Christine Szczepanski
- Mona Wilson
- Edward Yeager
- Sr. Jessy, OSF
- Everyone who is ill with Covid-19
- ...and for all who are
- homebound, elderly, in nursing
- care, or living with chronic illness

**Pray for those who have died...**

Benjamin Joseph Troisi, father of Jeanine

—His mercy endures forever.” Chronicles 6:34

**Parish Pastoral Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Brown</td>
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<td>Anthony</td>
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<td>Lorraine</td>
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<td>Gursam</td>
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<td>Anne Marie</td>
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<td>Liz Klesche</td>
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<td>Jeanne</td>
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<td>Claude</td>
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<td>Deborah</td>
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<td>Wina</td>
<td>Reyes-Bruce</td>
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<td>Lisa</td>
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<td>Ana</td>
<td>Kelly, Ex-Officio</td>
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<td>Ex-Officio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
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<td>Jr.</td>
<td>Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio</td>
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<td>Isaac</td>
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<td>Marge</td>
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**Parish Finance Council:**

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<tr>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe Porter</td>
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<td>Hfinancecouncil</td>
<td>stmatthias.net</td>
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<td>Joe Porter</td>
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<td>Susan</td>
<td>Klincsak</td>
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<td>Barry</td>
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Apr 12, 2020

Page 3
Options in the Absence of Confession

Dear Fellow Parishioner,

We, the members of the Parish Finance Council, together with our pastor, Fr. Abraham, are praying for you during these anxious and uncertain times. Last June, we reported to the parish about our efforts to monitor, advise, and help administer the financial affairs of our parish. We also reported that while expenses were met, more needed to be done. In December, we provided a Financial Report. Under Fr. Abraham’s leadership, things were moving in a positive direction. How quickly things can change.

This is an unprecedented time. This situation has already financially impacted our parish. There have already been two weekends without an in-church Sunday offering, and more will be missed without Sunday Masses, Easter week services, Easter Masses, and our Carnival is cancelled. We have undertaken cost saving measures. We are committed to paying our dedicated church and school staff for as long as we can.

We need your help to support St. Matthias Church in continuing its mission for our parish family:

- **Prayer** – Please pray for our parish, priests, and pastoral staff who give of themselves every day in witness to Christ and service to our community.
- **Stay Connected** – Visit our website [www.stmathias.net](http://www.stmathias.net) and use the links to view Sunday Mass and keep up with parish news.
- **Financial Support** – help us meet our obligations and continue our ministry.

1) Register for online giving at [www.parishgiving.org](http://www.parishgiving.org) or click the Donate button (on the orange bar) [www.stmathias.net](http://www.stmathias.net). It really is easy to enroll, and easy to make changes.

2) Continue submitting your envelopes via mail or drop-off. Please be sure to use a check.

If you have questions or need help with online giving, please feel free to email us at [financecouncil@stmathias.net](mailto:financecouncil@stmathias.net) or leave a message at 732-873-1400.

Although we do not have access to our church building for services, we are the church. We are never deprived of God’s presence and His grace. Let’s do what we can to help St. Matthias.

In Christ,

Joe Porter, Chair of Finance Council

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Forgiveness of Sins: “Options in the Absence of Confession”

Dear Friends,

Catholics all over the world prepare for Easter through the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession during Lent. In the present pandemic situation, we too have followed orders to cancel all the scheduled Parish Penance Service plans. But there is good news about receiving forgiveness without going to confession in this unusual situation. Bishop Checchio has informed us that the Vatican has offered two recourses to the faithful.

**FIRST:** Catholics can have recourse to an act of perfect condition in the place of Sacramental Confession with certain conditions. Let me quote:

“Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contraction, coming form the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by *votum confessionis*, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no.1432).

In reminding your parishioners of this recourse, please also remind them that **perfect contrition:** rises from the love of God, who has been grievously offended, requires the sincere desire for forgiveness and requires the ardent commitment to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when available.”

This means, in the present situation it is not practical for us to make the Sacrament of Confession available as we used to, and yet we can certainly receive God’s forgiveness by following these instructions and conditions detailed above.

**SECOND:** The gift of special indulgence is granted to the faithful suffering from COVID-19 disease, commonly known as coronavirus, as well as to health care workers, family members and all those who in any capacity, including through prayer, care for them. This Plenary Indulgence is granted to the faithful suffering from coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or, if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer according to the Holy Father’s intentions), as soon as possible.

It is a big consolation for us all to know that we can experience forgiveness and God’s mercy in this situation when we cannot have the usual access to the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession. We appeal to God’s mercy in this situation when we all are called to take extreme precautions to arrest the spread of coronavirus in order to save our lives and those of others. May God bless us all.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal
Sunday Reflections

Marriage Tune-Up

Easter! The resurrection of Jesus which we celebrate on Easter was a pretty hard story for the women and apostles to believe. Today, we believe on the testimony of others and thousands of years of retelling the story. Unconditional love is so hard to believe. Believe your spouse’s love anyway.

Parenting Tune-Up

How do we celebrate Easter during this lockdown? There is no written rule that states an Easter Basket must be filled with only candy. Adding small prizes and presents of Easter-themed toys or puzzles to the basket is a great way to offset the amount of candy included. Kids will be just as happy with a basket filled with both candy and fun little gifts.

Easter & Coronavirus: Real Easter Egg is a Broken One!

“He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ... He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.” (Matthew 28:1-10)

A small chick begins the long journey to birth. The not-yet-a-bird weighs little more than air; its beak and claws are barely pin pricks. The bird-to-be is in its own little world: protected by the rigid shell, warmed by the mother hen’s body, nourished by the nutrients within the egg’s membrane. But then the chick begins the work of life. Over several days the chick keeps picking and picking until it can break out from its narrow world — and into an incomparably wider one. But for this to happen, the egg has to go to pieces. New life demands shattering the old.

That is the real Easter egg. Not a complete egg dyed and painted with so many designs and colors. Not an egg that has been hardboiled, impossible to shatter. Not an egg made of chocolate. The real Easter egg is shattered and destroyed. The real Easter egg exists in broken pieces. The real Easter egg is cracked and opened, yielding new life that has moved out to live in the open. For centuries, the world has marked the Resurrection of the Lord with eggs. But the Easter meaning of the egg is found in the struggle of the chick to free itself from its confines so as to move into much bigger world beyond it. We struggle to break out of a world that we perceive is going to pieces especially with this pandemic; we feel sad and discouraged at the thousands of people dead and tens of thousands infected. We may feel disinchanted with life itself, fearing that it will be cut short. The promise of the Easter Christ is that we can break out of our fear and experience healing from this pandemic. We can move into a feeling of true inner liberation with the Risen Christ who is always with us. The living presence of the Risen Lord gives us lasting peace and celestial joy in the face of the boredom, suffering, pain and tensions of our day-to-day life. “Peace be with you!” was His salutation to His disciples at all post-Resurrection appearances. For the true Christian, every day must be an Easter Day, lived joyfully in the close company of the Risen Lord.

Smile with Your Family

Christ did not really die! One lady wrote in to a question and answer forum, “Dear Sirs, Our preacher said on Easter, that Jesus just swooned on the cross and that the disciples nursed Him back to health. What do you think? Sincerely, Bewildered. She got this answer: “Dear Bewildered, Beat your preacher with a cat-of-nine-tails, nail him to a cross; hang him in the sun for 6 hours; run a spear through his side... put him in an airless tomb for 36 hours and see what happens. Sincerely, Charles.”

Resurrection in election: Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee was once asked if he believed in the Resurrection. “Of course, I do,” said Huckabee. “Dead people vote in every election we have in Arkansas. Resurrection is very real to us.”

When my son, William, was young, we belonged to a small country church. On Communion day, deacons would pass around the “bread and juice.” On Easter Sunday, we attended a church out of town that was more formal. What our church called bread and juice, this one referred to as ‘elements,’ a word William didn’t understand. As Communion began, the pastor said, “If the deacons will come forward, the elements will pass among us.” William was suddenly excited and I didn’t know why. Then he leaned toward me, whispering something that caused me to burst out laughing. With all eyes on us, I took him by the hand and we made a hasty exit. All the way to the car, he protested. “Mom, we’re going to miss the circus. The pastor said the elephants were going to pass among us!”

Courage of a Teen at Columbine High!

A day after the terrible tragedy at Columbine High, CNN journalist Larry King did a live interview with a teenage girl named Mickie Cain, a student who had witnessed the massacre. Mickie was having a difficult time maintaining her composure and was able to blurt out only a few words before lapsing into uncontrollable sobs. Larry King was patient and gave her plenty of time to regain her composure. Mickie recounted the chilling story: “Let me tell you about my friend Cassie,” she said. “[Cassie] was amazing... She completely stood up for God when the killers asked her if there was anyone [in the classroom] who had faith in Christ. She spoke up [and said she did] and they shot her for it.”

Such a testimony as Cassie made that day makes our witness look pretty pathetic, doesn’t it? The critical question is, would you make such a sacrifice for something that you knew was patently untrue? Of course not. And neither would those early disciples of Christ. They had met Christ, Risen from the grave, and they would not testify otherwise, even while being tortured. The witnesses are so credible, the change in their lives so dramatic, that their testimony cannot be disregarded.
There is a beautiful story told about a woman named Rosemary who works in the Alzheimer’s Unit of a nursing home. Rosemary and a colleague named Arlene brought the residents of the home together one Good Friday afternoon to view Franco Zeffirelli’s acclaimed production, Jesus of Nazareth. They wondered whether these elderly Alzheimer’s patients would even know what was going on, but they thought it might be worth the effort. When they finally succeeded in getting everyone into position, they started the video. Rosemary was pleasantly surprised at the quiet attention being paid to the screen. At last came the scene where Mary Magdalene comes upon the empty tomb and sees Jesus’ body not there. An unknown man, in reality the risen Christ, asks Mary why she is looking for the living among the dead. Mary runs as fast as she can back to the disciples and tells Peter and the rest with breathless excitement, “He’s alive! I saw Him, I tell you! He’s alive.” The doubt in their eyes causes Mary to pull back. “You don’t believe me . . . You don’t believe me!” From somewhere in the crowd of Alzheimer’s patients came the clear, resolute voice of Esther, one of the patients. “WE BELIEVE YOU,” she said, “WE BELIEVE YOU!” (Rosemary Kadrmas in Jeff Cavin’s et.al, Amazing Grace for the Catholic Heart)

We are to be Resurrection people: Easter, the feast of the Resurrection, gives us the joyful message that we are a “Resurrection people.” This means that we are not supposed to lie buried in the tomb of our sins, evil habits and dangerous addictions. It gives us the Good News that no tomb can hold us down anymore — not the tomb of despair, discouragement or doubt, nor that of death. Instead, we are expected to live a joyful and peaceful life, constantly experiencing the real presence of the Risen Lord in all the events of our lives. “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad” (Psalm 118:24).

How Can Anyone Deny Resurrection?!

Albert L. Roper was a prominent Virginia attorney, a graduate of the University of Virginia and its law school, who eventually became mayor of the city of Norfolk. He once began a thorough legal investigation into the evidence for the Resurrection of Christ, asking himself the question: “Can any intelligent person accept the Resurrection story?” After examining the evidence at length, he came away asking a different question: “Can any intelligent person deny the weight of this evidence?” Even those who traveled for three years with Jesus experienced disbelief over His Resurrection, but Jesus showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. We don’t base our faith on legends, myths, or fairy tales. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is well-documented, and many critics have been silenced (and even converted) when they’ve carefully investigated the evidence (Albert L. Roper, Did Jesus Rise From the Dead [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965], foreword).

We have a Risen Savior! He offers Himself to us today with many infallible proofs. The Resurrection is the greatest of the miracles -- it proves that Jesus is God. That is why St. Paul writes: “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain; and your faith is in vain... And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion and you are still lost in your sins... But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15: 14, 17, 20). If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then the Church is a fraud, and faith is a sham. But if He really did rise from the dead, His message is true!
Celebrating Our Faith — Liturgy

Easter Blessings from St. Matthias
Music Ministry

We are all still here, together, but apart. We hear your voices, feel your spirit, and remember your smiles.

It has always been our privilege to lead you in sung prayer. We had some amazing music planned for the Triduum and for Easter, but God is making the music this year—in the sounds of birds, and breezes, and even in the voices of loved ones on a Zoom call.

We will sing together again very soon. How glorious our “Alleluias” will sound! Until then, please join us in singing from your homes!

Christ is risen, He is risen indeed!
St. Matthias Music Ministry

Easter Witnesses
(Mark 16; Matthew 28)

The heady fragrances they carried rose above their heads like incense, exorcising the garden of death. “Who will roll away the stone for us?” the women whispered to one another.

Earlier, in the near-down darkness, they had posed the question to the other-as request, not challenge. They had no heart to challenge the flock hiding in terror behind secret doors.

None of the men had offered to go, so the women had set out in haste alone to straighten twisted feet and fingers, comb black blood from matted hair, anoint the precious body with spices.

“But who will roll away the stone?” they whispered again as they neared the tomb. “Jesus said prayer could move mountains. We must stay together, continue to believe.” They stepped firmly forward, balancing their heavy jars.

When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. Inside, they heard from a being dressed in light: “You are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.”

Fleeing from the tomb, intent on telling no one, they tripped pell-mell over terror and amazement onto the glowing feet of Jesus. “Go, tell the others!” he commanded.

After the telling, they set out in haste—together this time, a community of equals—to roll away stones, straighten crooked paths, comb the far countries, and anoint the precious world with Good News.

Irene Zimmerman

Do You Miss Listening to Our Music at St. Matthias?

Then visit our new St. Matthias Music Ministry YouTube channel to hear & see talented musicians, from our parish & beyond, performing sacred/liturgical songs for us online! Go to: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwhok3XnxutxyCq5E1LLJGA

Easter Sunday at St. Matthias
Easter Sunday, April 12:

Easter Sunday Mass will be live-streamed at 10 AM via our YouTube channel.
Please subscribe to our YouTube channel at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcxxG9GV_zJAiGqxcO7Bdgw

RCIA Featured in Catholic Spirit

Did you miss the March 17th issue of Catholic Spirit? If you did, you missed one of our St. Matthiis engaged couples and members of the 2019-2020 RCIA Family, Manishka Mishra and Steven Holloway. Be sure to read the story and enjoy Mani and Stev on the paper’s front cover. Also, see the names of all of the St. Matthias Elect and Candidates. https://catholicspirit.com/e-edition.

The Rite of Christian Initiation and the Reception into Full Communion has been postponed and will be rescheduled once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. More details will be provided soon. Please continue to pray for our Elect and Candidates as they continue on their journey with the loving support of this parish.

RCIA Featured in Catholic Spirit
Today, let us read together the sixth Beatitude which promises the vision of God and has purity of heart as a condition.

There is a Psalm that reads: “my heart says to thee, ’Thy face, Lord, do I seek.’ Hide not thy face from me” (Ps 27[28]:8-9).

This language manifests the thirst for a personal relationship with God, not a mechanical one, not a somewhat vague one, no: personal, which the Book of Job also expresses as a sign of a sincere relationship. The Book of Job reads: “I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see thee” (42:5). And often I think that this is the journey of life, in our relationship with God. We know God from hearsay, but with our experience, we go forward, forward, and in the end, we come to know him directly, if we are faithful ... And this is the maturity of the Spirit.

How do we reach this intimacy, to know God with our eyes? We can think of the disciples at Emmaus, for example, who have the Lord beside them but “their eyes were kept from recognizing him” (Lk 24:16). The Lord will open their eyes at the end of a journey that culminates with the breaking of bread and had begun with a scolding: “O Foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (Lk 24:25). This is the reprimand at the beginning. It is the root of their blindness: their hearts were foolish and slow. And when the heart is foolish and slow, things cannot be seen. Things appear foggy. Herein lies the wisdom of this Beatitdude: in order to contemplate it, we need to enter within ourselves and make room for God because, as Saint Augustine says, God is “more inward than my innermost self” (“interior intimo meo” Confessions iii, 6, 11). In order to see God, there is neither the need to change eyeglasses or vantage point, nor to change the theological authors who teach the path; we need to free the heart from its deception. This is the only path.

This is a decisive maturity: when we realize that our worst enemy is often hidden within our heart. The most noble battle is the one against the inner deception that creates our sins. Because sins change our inner vision, they change our evaluation of things. They make us see things that are not real or at least not that real.

It is thus important to understand what purity of heart is. In order to do so, we should remember that, for the Bible, the heart does not consist only in feelings, but rather it is a human being’s most intimate place, the inner space where people are themselves. This is according to the Bible.

The Gospel of Matthew itself says “if our eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness” (Matt 6:23). This light is the gaze of the heart, the perspective, synthesis and the point from which reality can be seen (cf. Evangelii Gaudium, n. 143).

But what does having a “pure” heart mean? A pure heart lives in the presence of the Lord, preserving in the heart what is worthy of the relationship with him. Only in this way can one possess an intimate life that is “unified, linear and unwinding.”

A purified heart is, therefore, the result of a process that implies liberation and renunciation. Those who are pure of heart are not born that way but rather they have experienced an inner simplification, learning to renounce the evil within oneself, which the Bible calls circumcision of the heart (cf. Dt 10:16; 30:6, Ex 44:9; Jer 4:4).

This inner purification implies recognition of the part of the heart that is under the influence of evil — “You know Father, I feel this way, I think this way, I see this way and this is bad”; recognizing the bad part, the part that is clouded by evil — in order to learn the art of always allowing ourselves to be trained and guided by the Holy Spirit. The journey from a sick heart, from a sinful heart, from a heart that cannot see things well because it is in sin, to the fullness of the light of the heart, is the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who guides us to take this journey. Through this journey of the heart, we can achieve “seeing God”.

In this beatific vision, there is an escatological dimension of the future, as with all Beatitudes: it is the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven towards which we are directed. But there is also the other dimension: to see God means understanding the design of Providence in what happens to us, to recognize his presence in the Sacraments, his presence in our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and the suffering, and to recognize God there where he manifests himself (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2519).

This Beatitude is somewhat the fruit of the preceding ones: if we have listened to the thirst for good that dwells within us and we are aware of living of mercy, a journey of freedom begins which lasts an entire lifetime and leads us to Heaven. It is serious work, work that is carried out by the Holy Spirit if we give him the room to do it, if we are open to the action of the Holy Spirit. This is why we can say that it is mostly the work of God in us — in the trials and the purification of life — and this is the work of God and of the Holy Spirit who brings great joy, true and profound peace. Let us not be afraid, let us open the doors of our heart to the Holy Spirit so that he may purify us and lead us forward in this journey towards full joy.

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking faithful joining us through the media, as we continue on our Lenten journey towards Easter. Upon you and your families, I invoke the strength and peace that come from our Lord Jesus Christ. May God bless you!

Lastly, I greet young people, the sick, the elderly and newlyweds. May the last glimpse of the Lenten season that we are experiencing, foster a suitable preparation for the celebration of Easter, leading each of us to an even deeper closeness to Christ. I offer my Blessing to everyone.

Francis
We Have Switched Our Online Giving Platform to Parish Giving

As you may have heard these past few weeks, we have switched our online giving platform from Faith Direct to Parish Giving. Our contract with Faith Direct ends in April.

Thank you to everyone who has already signed up with Parish Giving. If you have not yet done so, we invite you to sign up today at www.parishgiving.org

We understand that these are difficult times for everyone, including from a financial perspective. Know that you have complete control over how much and when you donate, after you sign up with Parish Giving, and can make changes at any time.

Especially during these difficult days when we cannot gather together on Sundays, our staff is working remotely to serve the needs of our community. We have been strategizing ways to minister more creatively. Last Sunday was the first time we posted our Sunday mass on our website. Our leadership groups (Pastoral Council, Finance Council, etc.) are starting to meet online. Many LiveLent groups continue to meet using Zoom and other online meeting platforms. Our school continues to teach all of our students using distance-learning and lots of creativity from our dedicated teachers and staff.

We have just created a new e-letter — St. Matthias Family Connect, — and other online media. Please know that we welcome your ideas and suggestions. Feel free to email any of the Parish Staff with your input. Just go to the cover of the bulletin for the names and email addresses. And please be generous, as you are able, in order to help us continue to serve you during these challenging times. Thank you.

Are You Shopping Online These Days?

Many of us are ordering food and supplies online and either having the items shipped or are doing a drive-by pick-up or take-out. Why not use this opportunity to help our school, by purchasing online Scrip cards before you place your shopping order? You will receive the gift card code online and then can type in the code to pay for your items on the store/restaurant’s website. We have cards for 275 venues!

Even if you plan to physically visit a grocery store or drugstore or big box store, you can print out the gift card at home. Then when you make your purchase, just hold up the sheet of paper and the cashier can scan it. No need for the cashier to touch your credit card nor to hand you cash back as change. Or you can view the code on your phone, and just hold up the phone for the cashier to scan.

We have many different gift cards available online. To purchase them, here are the steps:

1. Go to www.MyScripWallet.com
2. Click on “Create An Account”
3. Type in the following Enrollment Code: LE2E4F89388. Then follow the prompts. (You only need to enter the information that has an * next to it.)
4. Once you register, you will be able to purchase any cards you choose, and St. Matthias School will receive a rebate. Be sure to select “Scrip Now eCard” instead of “Physical card” so you receive the code online! (We are unable to deliver any physical cards at this time.) Thank you!

Stewardship Reflection April 12, 2020

Easter Sunday

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (Colossians 3:2)

Do you put God first in all things? Possessions, money, power, ego can easily become gods to many of us. Do a quick check of what is important to you. Is God at the very top of the list? If not, your priorities need to be re-adjusted. Don’t let earthly things become a god before God. This is also the first commandment – I am the Lord your God, you shall not have any strange gods before me.

Reflexiones — 2 de abril de 2020 — Domingo de Pascua

“Piensen en las cosas que están arriba, no en las cosas que están en la tierra”. (COLOSENSES 3:2)

¿Pones a Dios primero en todas las cosas? Las posesiones, el dinero, el poder, el ego pueden convertirse fácilmente en dioses para muchos de nosotros. Haz una verificación rápida de lo que es importante para ti. ¿Está Dios a la cabeza de tu lista? Si no, tus prioridades deben ser reajustadas. No dejes que las cosas terrenales se conviertan en dioses ante Dios. Este es también el primer mandamiento: soy el Señor tu Dios, no tendrás dioses extraños delante de mí.

Being Good Stewards

Stewardship Reflection April 12, 2020

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Being Good Stewards

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year 2019-2020

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*Faith Direct amount will be posted when available

Faith Direct/Parish Giving for this Fiscal Year

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The Catholic Spirit Newspaper Donations (Includes Faith Direct.): $1,118.27

Connecting with Our Local Community

FLAG of Somerset

The Front Line Appreciation Group of Somerset (FLAG) has been founded by SMS mom and alum Kathleen (McGrath) Foley, to support local restaurants and keep the front line fueled. With the aid of fellow SMS alum Denise (Stuewe) Quenault, and SMS moms Sue Kachurick and Christine Lavelle, FLAG of Somerset has a goal to provide 1-2 meals per week to the healthcare workers and staff at St. Peter’s University Hospital and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can support FLAG of Somerset with your generous donation via Venmo (see above) or PayPal at flagofsomersetcovid19@gmail.com. Email flagofsomersetcovid19@gmail.com for more information if you prefer to pay by check. Any size donation is greatly appreciated and can make a HUGE difference! Follow us on Facebook at FLAG of Somerset, or on Instagram at flag somerset. Any leftover monies will be donated to the Franklin Food Bank at the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic, which we are all praying will end soon.

Saint Peter’s Hospital Asking Volunteers to Sew Masks

The hospital is in need of extra masks for the staff. If you have a sewing machine, please consider helping. Masks can be made using scraps of cotton fabric and then mailed to the hospital or dropped off.

Local stores (such as Joann’s and Michael’s) are offering shipping of supplies to your home and online ordering with curbside pickup.

There are three different types of masks that can be made, and there is a video with detailed instructions for each type. The hospital needs all three types. Please consider helping.

To view the instructions for making and mailing the masks, please go to http://www.stmatthias.net/connect/masks

Thank you!

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

Parish Registration — Welcome new members! Please register by calling the Parish

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.

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

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The RCIA process is an opportunity for instruction and spiritual transformation for any adult seeking a deeper understanding of the Catholic tradition or full incorporation into the Catholic Church. If you are interested in becoming a Catholic or completing the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism/ Confirmation/Eucharist, please call the Parish Office.

Stewardship

Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all our blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us. Whether it is clothes for the poor, food for the hungry, outreach to youth, in education, in worship, or simply arms stretched out to someone who is lonely, the Catholic Community of St. Matthias encourages everyone to become stewards of the gifts they have been given by God, returning a portion in gratitude to God for the work of ministry here at St. Matthias and beyond our local community.

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.

Bulletin Article Requests

Please email proposed bulletin articles to bulletin@stmatthias.net by 6 pm, Wednesday, 10 days before the intended issue (earlier for holiday weekends).