While the Parish Office is closed, please contact staff directly at the following emails:

For all Parish emails, add @stmatthias.net

Pastor: Rev Abraham Orapankal, abraham
Parochial Vicar: Rev. Msgr. Joseph Curry, jcurry
Pastoral Staff
Deacon Russell Demkovitz, rdemkovitz
Ana V Kelly, Marketing & Development, akelly
Dalees R Nann, Faith Formation, dnann
Deacon John Radovski, deaconjohn
Denise Sawick, Acting Business Manager and Accountant, denise
Joan Best Seamon, Music Ministry, jseamon
Sr Marie Therese Sherwood, OSF, Social Concerns, msherwood
Phyllis Stone, Liturgy/RCIA and Administrative Assistant to the Pastor, pstone

St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)
Eileen Brett, Principal, ebrett
Joseph Gidaro, Vice Principal, jgidaro

Parish Office Staff
Kyle Counts, Day Receptionist
Nathalie Godell, Formation/Parish Support Sec.
Leslie Guillen Evening Receptionist/Bulletin Editor
Amy Hanna, Parish Support Secretary
Joan Jones, Evening Receptionist
Vinnie Natale, Bookkeeper
Trish Stumper, Parish Support Secretary

Maintenance Staff
Julie Montero, Maintenance Supervisor
Mario Brown, Custodian
Connry Davis, Custodian
Juan Diaz Flores, Custodian
Silvia Nizano, Housekeeper
Mohamed Siaka, Custodian

St. Matthias Parish Office
168 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873
732-828-1400, fax: 732-828-0866
www.stmatthias.net

Parish Office Building: Currently closed.
We are working remotely; use emails below or call our office and leave a message.

Mass Schedule: Every Sunday on our YouTube channel: (Private masses are also being celebrated)
St. Matthias School (SMS):
170 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873
732-828-1402
www.stmatthias.info
School operating via distance learning.

We Hope to Be Calling You Soon

Over the coming weeks, our parish staff will be calling all of our 2,849 registered parishioner households to see how you are doing and to ask if there is anything our parish can help you with at this difficult time.

We expect that some phone numbers and other contact information may be out-of-date. If your contact information has changed, please email your updated information to Amy Hanna at ahanna@stmatthias.net
If you never registered at our Parish and would like to do so, please use the registration form on our website at www.stmatthias.net/connect/about/register We welcome you to join us!

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.

YouTube Subscribe to Our St. Matthias YouTube Channel

Please subscribe to our official St. Matthias YouTube Channel. You will be notified each week as soon as the Sunday Mass is available for viewing. We need to reach 1,000 subscribers to help with the filming of our Masses. Go to: www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ
Join Us for Mass Every Sunday:
Join us every Sunday on our YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

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

Read Our Bulletin Online Each Week:
http://www.stmatthias.net/connect/bulletin

Share uplifting stories on “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

Listen to Our New Music Ministers
See the box on page 6 and enjoy our music by visiting:
www.youtube.com/channel/UCwhok3XnxutxyCq5E1LLJGA

Church Building
We invite you to pray and participate with us online. The church building is open for individual prayer as listed in our online Calendar (see above). If you are not feeling well, please stay home and join us in prayer remotely. If you decide to come, please follow ALL government guidelines (e.g., social distancing, staying at least 6 feet away from others, wearing a face covering/mask, etc.) 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.

Office/School Buildings Closed, “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.

In this time of challenge for us, it can be so easy to use quick phrases we have heard overused so often in our lifetime, such as;

Oh, well, this too will pass.
Better days are yet to come.
Keep calm and carry on.
The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.
A life lived in fear is a life half lived.
Worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere.
Nothing in life is to be feared...it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.
Don’t worry, be happy.
Don’t worry about a thing, because every little thing’s gonna be alright.
Things could always be better, but things could always be worse.

If these words of perhaps someone’s idea of wisdom is enough for you, then wonderful. But, I would challenge us to dig deeper. Dig deeply into our hearts and open the Scriptures for our daily bread. Let us listen to the words of Jeremiah....

Heal me, Lord, that I may be healed.
Save me, that I may be saved.
For You are my Praise.

Jeremiah 17:14

Let us use the words of Scripture to look for guidance and wisdom. Let us listen to those who had their eyes fixed on the Lord for their Light on an unknown path. We follow that path today, that path which is unknown and feels endless. But, we follow it. The steps we are taking during this time of isolation for our safety is a path we have never taken before either alone or with those we love.

This time of isolation could be interpreted by some of us as a punishment or wasted time, and yet, it could birth within us a renaissance of thought and creativity. Let us continue to dig deeply and use the words of Scripture to Light our own path, which is such a mystery to us at this time. And, let it also allow us to share the Light within us with others. As Jeremiah tells us, save us, so that we may be saved. Open our hearts, open our minds, save us from what holds us back. Release what holds us back and sing, dance, create and share those gifts that the Lord has saved for us. Take this time to create anew. Isn’t that what this season of Easter is all about. Be saved, be renewed, be creative.

Eileen Brett
Readings for the Week

Monday: Acts 4:23-31; Ps 2:1-3, 4-7a, 7b-9; Jn 3:1-8
Tuesday: Acts 4:32-37; Ps 93:1ab, 1cd-2, 5; Jn 3:7b-15
Wednesday: Acts 5:17-26; Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Jn 3:16-21
Thursday: Acts 5:27-33; Ps 34:2, 9, 17-18, 19-20; Jn 3:31-36
Friday: Acts 5:34-42; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Jn 6:1-15
Saturday: 1 Pt 5:5b-14; Ps 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17; Mk 16:15-20
Sunday: Acts 2:14, 22-33; Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11; 1 Pt 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35

Mass Intentions for the Week*

Saturday, Apr 18 5:00PM Intention of Parishioners

Sunday, Apr 19 8:00AM For the Souls in Purgatory, by Jan Kusiak
10:00AM William Chares Kashatus, by John & Isabelle Baker
12:00PM Mary & Bud Renda, by Lena & Grandchildren
3:30PM Joseph Novak, by The Family

Monday, Apr 20 8:00AM Sr. Christofora Kapodistrias, by The Klimik Family

Tuesday, Apr 21 8:00AM William Kempton, by wife, Doris Kempton

Wednesday, Apr 22 8:00AM Nicholas Hughes, by Daddy, Michael, Patrick & Brittany

Thursday, Apr 23 8:00AM Corazon Gabriel, by The Chan & Gabriel Families

Friday, Apr 24 8:00AM Susai Nathan, by Nathan & Family

Saturday, Apr 25 8:00AM Jack Sullivan, by Mary & Family

Sunday, Apr 26 8:00AM Intention of Parishioners
10:00AM Regina Vidal, by Menchie Ventura
12:00PM Mae & Alfred Schunk, by John, Ellen, John Patrick, Valerie & Steven
5:30PM Jose & Leonor Calimlim Anniversary Memorial (66 yrs.), by The Calimlim Family

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.

Pray for those who have died...

Hortencia Dimzon
Reynaldo Driz
Raymond Sawicki
Lourdes Marie Padilla-Schafer
Mary Theresa Reynolds
Louis Rimblas
James Forte
Elizabeth (Bess) Haefner
Dottie Dugan
—“His mercy endures forever.”

Parish Leadership

Parish Pastoral Council,
Co-Chairs:
Tom Phalen, thomase phalen@gmail.com
Nick Grippo
nickgrippo@gmail.com
Tom Aussem

Denise Brown
Anthony Ehler
Lorraine Farr
Gusam Felix
Anne Marie Francis
Liz Kiesche
Jeanne Kolmer
Claudine Langin
Deborah Lesky
Joe Percoco
Marybeth Purcell
Wina Reyes-Bruce
Lisa Robinson
Ana Kelly, Ex-Officio
Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

Parish Finance Council:
Joe Porter, Chair
financecouncil @stmatthias.net

Joe Porter, Chair
Susan Klimcsak
Bary Dusault
Gwen Orlowski

Audrey Francis
Kester Hector
Denise Sawicki, Ex-Officio
Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

Trustees:
Isaac Peng
Marge Richards

Page 3 www.stmatthias.net Apr 19, 2020 668
Sunday Reflections

Marriage Tune-Up

Over the years people develop little quirks and annoying habits. In healthy marriages both partners learn to overlook a lot and do little favors to accommodate the other. Jim knows I don’t like him to scrunch the carpet with his feet when sitting on the couch. He obliges me by putting his feet on a piece of cardboard. It’s silly, but it means a lot.

Parenting Tune-Up

April 22 is Earth Day. The coronavirus lockdown has reduced the carbon emissions resulting in unexpected benefits for the earth. Polluted air is becoming cleaner, murky waters are becoming clearer. Discuss this with your kids and ask them what other benefits they see.

St. Faustina and Divine Mercy

St. Faustina of Poland is the well-known apostle of Divine Mercy. On the 30th of April, 2000, at 10:00 AM on the Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday, the Feast requested by Jesus in His communications with St. Faustina), His Holiness Pope St. John Paul II celebrated the Eucharist in St Peter’s Square and proceeded to the canonization of Blessed Sister Faustina. [John Paul himself would be canonized on this same Feast Day – April 27 in 2014 – by Pope Francis.]

Saint Faustina invites us by the witness of her life to keep our Faith and Hope fixed on God the Father, rich in mercy, who saved us by the precious Blood of His Son.

During her short life, the Lord Jesus assigned to St. Faustina three basic tasks: 1. to pray for souls, entrusting them to God’s incomprehensible Mercy; 2. to tell the world about God’s generous Mercy; 3. to start a new movement in the Church focusing on God’s Mercy.

At the canonization of St. Faustina, Pope St. John Paul II said: “The cross, even after the Resurrection of the Son of God, speaks, and never ceases to speak, of God the Father, Who is absolutely faithful to His eternal love for man. ... Believing in this love means believing in mercy.” “The Lord of Divine Mercy,” a drawing of Jesus based on the vision given to St. Faustina, shows Jesus raising his right hand in a gesture of blessing, with His left hand on his heart from which gush forth two rays, one red and one white. The picture contains the message, “Jesus, I trust in You!” [Jezu ufam Tobie]. The rays streaming out have symbolic red for the blood of Jesus, which is the life of souls and white for the water of Baptism which justifies souls. The whole image is symbolic of the mercy, forgiveness and love of God.

How to Have Hope in This Time of Anxiety?

I wish coronavirus was my first epidemic. As a medical missionary and a relief team leader in war zones around the world I’ve risked my life trying to save lives in more epidemics than I can count. There is nothing special about that. It has been the normal Christian life throughout history. Christians don’t run from a crisis. They run to them.

My anchor when there were two or three patients to a bed, little personal protective equipment, inadequate treatment options and not enough trained staff has been 2 Timothy 1:6, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” I prayed God would give me a sound mind with wisdom to protect those not ill and to treat those that are knowing that I could only treat, Jesus heals. I would pray that God’s love and compassion would be evident in me. Patients need to know I cared even when I might not be able to cure. As Jesus demonstrated, compassion is the best medicine. Most importantly, I didn’t need to fear because God was with me. I had given myself completely to Him and because of that He provided a “peace that passed all understanding.”

I learned that God does his best work in and through me in the midst of crisis. He can do the same for you. Remember, faith is a spiritual muscle. It only gets stronger when you exercise it! (David Stevens, CEO –emeritus of Christian Medical & Dental Associations)

Smile with Your Family

Traffic cop’s mercy: A priest was forced by a police officer to pull over for speeding. As the officer was about to write the ticket, the priest said to him, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” The police officer handed the priest the ticket, and said, “Go, and sin no more.” 😊

Stan: My wife treats me like I’m a god.
Steve: You mean she worships you, honors you, and obeys you?
Stan: No, she ignores me until she wants something.😊

Coronavirus smiles: My 25th birthday is today, but I want you all to know that am postponing it till this pandemic is over; so I will be announcing the date when I will be turning 25. 😊

If you need 144 rolls of toilet paper, for a 14-day quarantine, you probably should’ve been seeing a doctor long before Covid-19 😊

Please help, I already ate all my quarantine snacks! 😊

Marriage Tune-Up

Over the years people develop little quirks and annoying habits. In healthy marriages both partners learn to overlook a lot and do little favors to accommodate the other. Jim knows I don’t like him to scrunch the carpet with his feet when sitting on the couch. He obliges me by putting his feet on a piece of cardboard. It’s silly, but it means a lot.

Parenting Tune-Up

April 22 is Earth Day. The coronavirus lockdown has reduced the carbon emissions resulting in unexpected benefits for the earth. Polluted air is becoming cleaner, murky waters are becoming clearer. Discuss this with your kids and ask them what other benefits they see.

St. Faustina and Divine Mercy

St. Faustina of Poland is the well-known apostle of Divine Mercy. On the 30th of April, 2000, at 10:00 AM on the Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday, the Feast requested by Jesus in His communications with St. Faustina), His Holiness Pope St. John Paul II celebrated the Eucharist in St Peter’s Square and proceeded to the canonization of Blessed Sister Faustina. [John Paul himself would be canonized on this same Feast Day – April 27 in 2014 – by Pope Francis.]

Saint Faustina invites us by the witness of her life to keep our Faith and Hope fixed on God the Father, rich in mercy, who saved us by the precious Blood of His Son.

During her short life, the Lord Jesus assigned to St. Faustina three basic tasks: 1. to pray for souls, entrusting them to God’s incomprehensible Mercy; 2. to tell the world about God’s generous Mercy; 3. to start a new movement in the Church focusing on God’s Mercy.

At the canonization of St. Faustina, Pope St. John Paul II said: “The cross, even after the Resurrection of the Son of God, speaks, and never ceases to speak, of God the Father, Who is absolutely faithful to His eternal love for man. ... Believing in this love means believing in mercy.” “The Lord of Divine Mercy,” a drawing of Jesus based on the vision given to St. Faustina, shows Jesus raising his right hand in a gesture of blessing, with His left hand on his heart from which gush forth two rays, one red and one white. The picture contains the message, “Jesus, I trust in You!” [Jezu ufam Tobie]. The rays streaming out have symbolic red for the blood of Jesus, which is the life of souls and white for the water of Baptism which justifies souls. The whole image is symbolic of the mercy, forgiveness and love of God.

How to Have Hope in This Time of Anxiety?

I wish coronavirus was my first epidemic. As a medical missionary and a relief team leader in war zones around the world I’ve risked my life trying to save lives in more epidemics than I can count. There is nothing special about that. It has been the normal Christian life throughout history. Christians don’t run from a crisis. They run to them.

My anchor when there were two or three patients to a bed, little personal protective equipment, inadequate treatment options and not enough trained staff has been 2 Timothy 1:6, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” I prayed God would give me a sound mind with wisdom to protect those not ill and to treat those that are knowing that I could only treat, Jesus heals. I would pray that God’s love and compassion would be evident in me. Patients need to know I cared even when I might not be able to cure. As Jesus demonstrated, compassion is the best medicine. Most importantly, I didn’t need to fear because God was with me. I had given myself completely to Him and because of that He provided a “peace that passed all understanding.”

I learned that God does his best work in and through me in the midst of crisis. He can do the same for you. Remember, faith is a spiritual muscle. It only gets stronger when you exercise it! (David Stevens, CEO –emeritus of Christian Medical & Dental Associations)
Earth Day Quote from Pope Francis

“The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains; everything is, as it were, a caress of God.” Pope Francis, in “Laudato Si’” – his Encyclical ‘On Creation.’

The Spirit of “Cool and Daring!”

“Peace be with you . . .” And when he said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” John 20: 19-31

In her book Jesus Freak, Sara Miles writes about her San Francisco church’s weekly food pantry. Parishioners have worked hard over the years to build up the pantry, feeding hundreds of poor and struggling families in the Bay area. The church is most proud that the pantry is run by poor people, for poor people. Visitors to the parish are impressed and deeply moved by what Sara and her community have done. But there is often a sadness to their flattery; there seems to be a sense of resignation and resentment of the church’s work. Sara writes:

“People insisted that . . . our food pantry was so special, that they couldn’t possibly do anything like it themselves. It was as if they wanted to explain away the possibility of their own power. Of course, they’d say, you can experiment as much as you like out there in California; we could never get away with that in the South. Of course you must have a lot of creative folks in your congregation, not like our boring Midwestern grandmothers. Of course you have a wonderful bishop, a lot of money, a better class of poor people, some mysterious kind of permission that allows you to be so cool and daring.

“I wanted to cry. What more permission do they need . . . ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ isn’t enough?”

The Spirit that Jesus breathes on the Eleven on Easter night is “breathed” upon us, as well. It is the grace that enables us to live our lives with the belief that the good is always possible; it is the grace that enables us to transform our doubts and fears into reconciliation, justice and peace. We can let ourselves become so beaten down by life that our cynicism begins to destroy our spirit: we are no longer able to realize God’s presence among us; we fail to see this life of ours as a gift from God, given in order that we might find God and, in the process, find ourselves. May we realize God’s Spirit in our midst, enabling us to re-create this time and place of ours in the peace of the Risen One.

Forgive Your Son’s Murderers?

Mary and her husband suffered the tragic loss of their son, and it was her understanding of Divine Mercy that helped her and her family forgive those that took his life during a robbery. Mary tells us how her attendance at a Mother of Mercy Messengers (MOMM) Divine Mercy Program helped her overcome great obstacles and allowed her to forgive and even to pray for them. Knowing that as long as there is life, there is hope, the family did not seek the death penalty for his murderers. How differently does the person filled with God’s mercy see and react to the world. (http://mercyimages.com/video_MaryDuray.php)

“Law vs Mercy”

In Reader’s Digest, Jim Williams of Montana, writes: “I was driving too fast late one night when I saw the flashing lights of a police car in my rearview mirror. As I pulled over and rolled down my window of my station wagon, I tried to dream up an excuse for my haste. But when the patrolman reached the car, he said nothing. Instead, he merely shined his flashlight in my face, then on my seven-month-old in his car seat, then on our three other children, who were asleep, and lastly on the two dogs in the very back of the car. Returning the beam of light to my face, he then uttered the only words of the encounter, ‘Son,’ he said, ‘you can’t afford a ticket, Slow down.’ And with that, he returned to his car and drove away.” Sometimes mercy triumphs over law. So it is for sinners who call out to Jesus.

Today’s First Reading from Acts 2:42-47 shows us how the early Church grew every day because of the acts of mercy and sharing, sacrificial, agápe love practiced by the early Christians. They expressed their love and mercy by sharing what they had with everyone in need. Some of them even sold their property and entrusted the money to the Church so that the poor might be helped and supported. We are told that they got the inspiration and good will for the practice of love and mercy because of their sense of being one believing community. They were strengthened by their punctual and active participation in the “Breaking of the Bread”—the Eucharistic Liturgy. They became single-minded and merciful because of what they learned from the apostles and because of their fellowship and prayer life.

What to Do When You Are Not In Control?

Go to God and say, “I am not in control. Give me the humility to realize this and the paradoxical freedom and peace that comes from realizing that I am not in control, but you, O Lord are in control.” I would also encourage them to pray, as St. Paul directs, to pray especially for those in authority that we may live in a peaceable and godly way.” (See 1 Tim 2:2) (Msgr Charles Pope, Holy Comforter – St. Cyprian Parish, Washington, D.C.)
Celebrating Our Faith — Liturgy

Did You Celebrate the Triduum with Us?

We had record numbers of people celebrate the Liturgies with us during the Triduum, via our official YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

For the first time, we live-streamed the Palm Sunday Mass and then posted the recording afterwards. We continued doing this for the Holy Thursday Mass, the Good Friday Liturgy, the Easter Vigil on Saturday night, and the Easter Sunday morning Mass.

The storm and winds on Thursday knocked out our internet so our Holy Thursday Mass was delayed and was temporarily live-streamed on Facebook and then the recording was later placed on YouTube. The “participation” (number of households that viewed at least part of the service) for the other Masses were as follows:

Palm Sunday—  1,959 (750 of these viewed it live)
Good Friday Liturgy—  1,256 (950/live)
Easter Vigil—  1,123 (769/live)
Easter Sunday Mass—  1,253 (1,176/live)

We encourage everyone to continue celebrating the Sunday Mass with us each week via our YouTube channel. If you subscribe to the channel, you will receive an email as soon as the Mass is available on line.

Parish News

FLAG of Somerset

Support our Front line and our Local Restaurants

There are many stories of hope during this pandemic. Here is one that our own parishioners are spearheading. FLAG of Somerset (Front Line Appreciation Group) was founded by Kathleen (McGrath) Foley, a local nurse who has witnessed the tremendous work - and dire need - of our healthcare workers. With three of her friends - Sue Kachurick, Christine Lavelle, and Denise (Stuewe) Quenault – joining this noble cause, they mobilized more than 1,200 Somerset community members to fund and deliver fresh meals for our healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic while supporting local restaurants who have been negatively impacted by the crisis.

Hours after creating their Facebook page, the Somerset chapter gained immense momentum, raising close to $2,000. The funding – which has now crossed $20,000.00 - is then used to purchase meals. FLAG has arranged for over 900 meals to be delivered to 2 New Brunswick hospitals since its inception on March 25, 2020, including a special Easter Dinner delivery.

Inspired by the example and passion of these four women of St. Matthias, some local restaurants are offering discounted meals and matching donations, amplifying the community’s desire to serve our healthcare workers. Some restaurants have even donated 100 percent of the meals on behalf of the group. “It’s really great to know that even though our mission is to support the local restaurants, so many of them want to support our mission and support the frontline workers in exchange,” Christine Lavelle said. “Everybody keeps giving, and it’s just wonderful to see.”

The Parish of St. Matthias is very proud of these four women and support and promote their exemplary example and spirit.

You can support FLAG of Somerset with any size donation via Venmo at venmo.com/flagofsomersetcovid19 or PayPal at PayPal.me/flagofsomerset. Please email flagofsomersetcovid19@gmail.com for more information if you prefer to pay by check.

We Keep in Our Prayers …


Did You Celebrate the Triduum with Us?
Tuesday, September 1
Faculty Meeting
4:00-5:30 PM Welcome Back Social for SMS Families

Wednesday, September 2
First Day of School for Middle School Students
Dismissal 12:30

Thursday, September 3
First Day of School for Grades 1-5
8:30-10:00 AM Orientation for parents and students of Pre-K and Kindergarten
Dismissal 12:30

Friday, September 4
School Day for all students Pre-K through Grade 8
Dismissal 12:30

Monday, September 7
No School – Labor Day

Tuesday, September 8
First Full Day of School for all students Pre-K through Grade 8
BSP/ASP begins

Thursday, September 10
6:30 PM Back to School Night

Friday, September 11
9:00 AM Back to School Mass

Hoping the above tentative schedule is helpful as you plan ahead. Even though the school offices across the nation are closed, planning for the upcoming year continues with administrative and teaching staffs.

The administration in concert with the SMS Technology Committee continues to build more resources available to the students on a 1:1 basis. Thanks to the efforts of the fundraising team for the Color Run, the school is now able to provide Chromebooks for each of our third grade students. Those devices arrived in the school just prior to our remote learning, so those devices will be cataloged and distributed to the students shortly after our return to school. That means all students grades three through eight will have a Chromebook exclusive for their use during the school day. The SMS Technology Committee has also recommended that students in grades one and two will have a Chromebook for each student at the onset of the 2020-2021 school year. These devices for grades one and two have been budgeted and will be ordered shortly after the re-opening of the school.

The profit realized from the Color Run was targeted in three areas: technology, literacy and Makerspace. With the funds available from the Color Run, guided reading books were purchased for the literacy initiative. These texts have been available and used effectively by our literacy staff. These allow us to teach students the necessary skills and strategies to move forward in their reading levels. Mrs. Lanzalotto made wonderful purchases to initiate our “makerspace mindset” in the media center. These purchases include but are not limited to furniture for makerspace activities and resources for students to explore, fiddle, question and create. Mr. Gidaro and Mrs. Lanzalotto attended workshops on the Makerspace Concept and turn-keyed the information learned to the entire teaching staff. So, thanks to the profits gained in the Color Run, we are moving forward with our technology, literacy and creative problem solving.

Despite our closure, the SMS Principal Search Committee continues its mission to recruit and interview candidates for the principal position at school. On April 7, the Search Committee conducted virtual interviews after having met for a planning meeting the week prior. The committee is serious about their purpose and committed to this important process in our forward movement as a school.

St. Matthias School is a caring, faith-filled, dynamic learning environment, which continues to be a superior choice for the education of our children. Mrs. Kosty and I continue to correspond with parents who are interested in enrolling their children at St. Matthias. We are not standing still, but rather moving ahead. The work of planning for a vibrant and productive 2020-2021 school year is happening now. If you know of someone thinking about enrolling their child, encourage them to reach out to Mrs. Kosty and me. We are anxious to welcome new families.
"After the Sabbath" (Mt 28:1), the women went to the tomb. This is how the Gospel of this holy Vigil began: with the Sabbath. It is the day of the Easter Triduum that we tend to neglect as we eagerly await the passage from Friday’s cross to Easter Sunday’s Alleluia. This year however, we are experiencing, more than ever, the great silence of Holy Saturday. We can imagine ourselves in the position of the women on that day. They, like us, had before their eyes the drama of suffering, of an unexpected tragedy that happened all too suddenly. They had seen death and it weighed on their hearts. Pain was mixed with fear: would they suffer the same fate as the Master? Then too there was fear about the future and all that would need to be rebuilt. A painful memory, a hope cut short. For them, as for us, it was the darkest hour.

Yet in this situation the women did not allow themselves to be paralyzed. They did not give in to the gloom of sorrow and regret, they did not morosely close in on themselves, or flee from reality. They were doing something simple yet extraordinary: preparing at home the spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They did not stop loving; in the darkness of their hearts, they lit a flame of mercy. Our Lady spent that Saturday, the day that would be dedicated to her, in prayer and hope. She responded to sorrow with trust in the Lord. Unbeknownst to these women, they were making preparations, in the darkness of that Sabbath, for “the dawn of the first day of the week”, the day that would change history. Jesus, like a seed buried in the ground, was about to make new life blossom in the world; and these women, by prayer and love, were helping to make that hope flower. How many people, in these sad days, have done and are still doing what those women did, sowing seeds of hope! With small gestures of care, affection and prayer. At dawn the women went to the tomb. There the angel says to them: “Do not be afraid. He is not here; for he has risen” (vv. 5-6). They hear the words of life even as they stand before a tomb... And then they meet Jesus, the giver of all hope, who confirms the message and says: “Do not be afraid” (v. 10). Do not be afraid, do not yield to fear: This is the message of hope. It is addressed to us, today. These are the words that God repeats to us this very night.

Tonight we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us: the right to hope. It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is not mere optimism; it is not a pat on the back or an empty word of encouragement, uttered with an empty smile. No! It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own. Over these weeks, we have kept repeating, “All will be well”, clinging to the beauty of our humanity and allowing words of encouragement to rise up from our hearts. But as the days go by and fears grow, even the boldest hope can dissipate. Jesus’ hope is different. He plants in our hearts the conviction that God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave he brings life.

The grave is the place where no one who enters ever leaves. But Jesus emerged for us; he rose for us, to bring life where there was death, to begin a new story in the very place where a stone had been placed. He, who rolled away the stone that sealed the entrance of the tomb, can also remove the stones in our hearts. So, let us not give in to resignation; let us not place a stone before hope. We can and must hope, because God is faithful. He did not abandon us; he visited us and entered into our situations of pain, anguish and death. His light dispelled the darkness of the tomb: today he wants that light to penetrate even to the darkest corners of our lives. Dear sister, dear brother, even if in your heart you have buried hope, do not give up: God is greater. Darkness and death do not have the last word. Be strong, for with God nothing is lost!

Courage. This is a word often spoken by Jesus in the Gospels. Only once do others say it, to encourage a person in need: “Courage; rise, [Jesus] is calling you!” (Mk 10:49). It is he, the Risen One, who raises us up from our neediness. If, on your journey, you feel weak and frail, or fall, do not be afraid, God holds out a helping hand and says to you: “Courage!” You might say, as did Don Abbondio (in Manzoni’s novel), “Courage is not something you can give yourself!” (I Promessi Sposi, XXV). True, you cannot give it to yourself, but you can receive it as a gift. All you have to do is open your heart in prayer and roll away, however slightly, that stone placed at the entrance to your heart so that Jesus’ light can enter. You only need to ask him: “Jesus, come to me amid my fears and tell me too: Courage!” With you, Lord, we will be tested but not shaken. And, whatever sadness may dwell in us, we will be strengthened in hope, since with you the cross leads to the resurrection, because you are with us in the darkness of our nights; you are certainty amid our uncertainties, the word that speaks in our silence, and nothing can ever rob us of the love you have for us.

This is the Easter message, a message of hope. It contains a second part, the sending forth. “Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee” (Mt 28:10), Jesus says. “He is going before you to Galilee” (v. 7), the angel says. The Lord goes before us; he goes before us always. It is encouraging to know that he walks ahead of us in life and in death; he goes before us to Galilee, that is, to the place which for him and his disciples evoked the idea of daily life, family and work. Jesus wants us to bring hope there, to our everyday life. For the disciples, Galilee was also the place of remembrance, for it was the place where they were first called. Returning to Galilee means remembering that we have been loved and called by God. Each one of us has their own Galilee. We need to resume the journey, reminding ourselves that we are born and reborn thanks to an invitation given gratuitously to us out of love, there in our respective Galilees. This is always the point from which we can set out anew, especially in times of crisis and trial, remembering our Galilee. (cont’d on next page)
Discovering God: Formation

Pope Francis’ Homily at the Easter Vigil (cont’d from previous page)

But there is more. Galilee was the farthest region from where they were: from Jerusalem. And not only geographically. Galilee was also the farthest place from the sacredness of the Holy City. It was an area where people of different religions lived: it was the “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Mt 4:15). Jesus sends them there and asks them to start again from there. What does this tell us? That the message of hope should not be confined to our sacred places, but should be brought to everyone. For everyone is in need of reassurance, and if we, who have touched “the Word of life” (1 Jn 1:1) do not give it, who will? How beautiful it is to be Christians who offer consolation, who bear the burdens of others and who offer encouragement: messengers of life in a time of death! In every Galilee, in every area of the human family to which we all belong and which is part of us – for we are all brothers and sisters – may we bring the song of life! Let us silence the cries of death, no more wars! May we stop the production and trade of weapons, since we need bread, not guns. Let the abortion and killing of innocent lives end. May the hearts of those who have enough be open to filling the empty hands of those who do not have the bare necessities.

Those women, in the end, “took hold” of Jesus’ feet (Mt 28:9); feet that had travelled so far to meet us, to the point of entering and emerging from the tomb. The women embraced the feet that had trampled death and opened the way of hope. Today, as pilgrims in search of hope, we cling to you, Risen Jesus. We turn our backs on death and open our hearts to you, for you are Life itself.

Being Good Stewards

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 our staff is working remotely to serve the needs of our community. We have been strategizing ways to minister more creatively. 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: LE2E4FB9388. 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!
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).