SPIRITUAL ANTIDOTE FOR CORONAVIRUS

When we hear more and more bad news about the Coronavirus, especially the growing number of those who tested positive and those who have died, we can feel fearful, anxious and discouraged. It is then that we need to realize that even though we have no control over this pandemic, we have full control over what happens in our minds and spirits. This is the time for us to have a greater recourse to our faith as our spiritual antidote. Here’s the simplest prescription: 1 tablet each in the morning, evening and night. The name of the tablets are:

Morning - Psalm 91: Prayer of one who has taken refuge in the Lord.
Afternoon - Psalm 23: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
Night - Psalm 121: My help comes from the Lord.

Prayer and meditation can bring us calm and peace. These can be done individually and as a family. Here’s another prayer:

Loving God, Your desire is for our wholeness and well being. Yet you know our hearts are restless and fearful with the collective suffering of our world at this time. We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened. We worry about our lives and the safety of our near and dear ones. We ache for all who are standing before an uncertain future.

We pray for your protection: may love, not fear, go viral. Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good. Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity. Help us to have profound trust in your faithful presence, as a God who does not abandon us. Help us to trust promises of Jesus Christ your son who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen. Our Father......

Let us keep taking all precautions and keep praying, because though we do not know what the future holds for us, the good news is that we know who holds our future! — Fr. Abraham Orapankal
This Week at St. Matthias

Please always check our website “Calendar” for the most up-to-date information — www.stmatthias.net/connect/calendar

Join Us for Mass via the Internet
Please join us for Mass each Sunday via our website, www.stmatthias.net. Last week’s mass was already posted and we will continue to celebrate Mass each Sunday.

Church Remains Open for Individual Prayer
Our Church building remains open from 8 am to 7 pm (Mon-Fri) and 10 am to 7 pm (Sat) for individual prayer. Times may change, so please check our online calendar before coming. (See above link.)

If you decide to come, please practice social distancing and stay at least 6 feet away from other individuals. Also, if possible, bring a few handwipes so you can wipe the parts of the pew that you touched and where you sat, the door handle, etc. Although we have sanitized our church and continue to do so, it is not possible to do this in between personal visits. Thank you for your understanding.

Individual Stations of the Cross
Several years ago, as part of an Eagle Scout project, wooden Stations of the Cross were built around the outside of our church, with the plaques we received from the Consolatas. You are welcome to pray the Stations of the Cross using these stations. Please continue to practice safe-distancing if you do this, including staying at least six feet apart and not touching the stations.

Holy Week and Easter at St. Matthias
We are waiting to hear from the diocese as to what we will be able to offer for Holy Week and Easter, as well as whether we may somehow distribute palms for Palm Sunday. As soon as we receive information, we will post it on our website.

St. Matthias Family Connect
We have just launched a new e-letter called “St. Matthias Family Connect!”. We sent the first issue to every email address in our parish database. We will soon have a sign-up form on our website so everyone can sign up. Please keep checking our website, www.stmatthias.net.

Prayer Lists
Kelly Counts continues to maintain our prayer lists for those who are sick and those who have died. If you would like to add/edit a name, please email Kelly at kcounts@stmatthias.net.

From the Pastor & Pastoral Staff

This Lent, a particular word has stood out for me every week in our scriptures and in our songs. My 2020 Lenten word of the year is MERCY. (What’s your Lenten word of the year?)

MERCY has been surrounding me - we even have two choir members this year named, you guessed it, MERCY!!

On the First Sunday of Lent, we sang from Psalm 51, “Have MERCY on me God in your kindness.”

Week Two we sang Psalm 33, “Let your MERCY be on us O God, as we place our trust in you.”

Every week, we have been singing our Kyrie Elesion “Lord have MERCY” and in our Agnus Dei “Miserere Nobis”, have MERCY on us.

Last week, we sang Psalm 23, “Surely goodness and MERCY shall follow me all the days of my life.”

And today, Week 5, we sing from Psalm 130 “With the Lord there is MERCY and fullness of redemption.”

I used to think that MERCY was simply forgiveness, but this year, I have come to a new understanding. MERCY is forgiveness, but it is also compassion shown toward someone who it is within one’s power to punish or harm.

So, I have been praying about how merciful I am, especially toward someone who has hurt me and others deeply. Am I merciful enough not to punish or harm, not to judge, not to spread rumors, not to tell disparaging stories? Does true mercy flow from me to others, the way it flows to me from God?

Abraham Lincoln said “I have always found that MERCY bears richer fruits than justice.”

And Pope Francis said “a little bit of MERCY makes the world less cold and more just.”

And so I will keep on singing and praying, even after Lent is over, “Gracious God, MERCY is your name….Blessed are the merciful for MERCY shall be theirs…Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have MERCY on me, have MERCY on me, Amen.”

We congratulate Fr. Abraham for his appointment as the 7th pastor of the Catholic Community of St. Matthias. Thank you, Bishop Checchio, for your wise decision, and thank you, Fr. Abraham, for saying yes to this challenging new adventure in your priestly ministry.

“May goodness ever surround you? May grace keep its arms around you. May God, rich in MERCY, grant that you’ll be filled with all the love your heart can hold on this day’s road and forever.” (J. Croegart)

Joan Best Seamon
Pastoral Associate for Liturgical Music
The Catholic Community of St. Matthias

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).
Pray for those who have died...

Roseann Wickman—mother of James & daughter - in-law, Kathy Edward F Lubowicki — father of Ed (and Beth) Lubowicki Lorraine Montemurro Mary Luizzi

—His mercy endures forever.” Chronicles 6:34

Parish Pastoral Leadership

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

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

Trustees:
Isaac Peng Marge Richards

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

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

Friday, Apr 3
8:00AM Eugene Kelly, by Frank & Pat Sellinger

Saturday, Apr 4
5:00PM Kevin Doyle, by Isabelle & John Baker

Sunday, Apr 5
10:00AM Floyd Krebs, Jr., by The Stellenkamp Family
12:00PM Intention of Parishioners
5:30PM Peggy Foy, by Diane Rice

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.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Mar 28
5:00PM Susan & James Sinners, by Mary

Sunday, Mar 29
8:00AM The Yacone Family, by Espy
10:00AM Intention of Parishioners
12:00PM Veronica, Kevin & Ronnie Regan, by Brian Regan
5:30PM Syrl B. Miller, by Mignon Miller-Baldi

Monday, Mar 30
8:00AM Trinitario Almazan, by Purita Aligaen

Tuesday, Mar 31
8:00AM Shirley Lucas, by The Miller Family

Wednesday, Apr 1
8:00AM Deceased Members of the Sunga/Munar Families, by Flora M. Sunga

Thursday, Apr 2
8:00AM Doreen Ferreia, by Helen & Family

Friday, Apr 3
8:00AM Eugene Kelly, by Frank & Pat Sellinger

Saturday, Apr 4
5:00PM Kevin Doyle, by Isabelle & John Baker

Sunday, Apr 5
10:00AM Floyd Krebs, Jr., by The Stellenkamp Family
12:00PM Intention of Parishioners
5:30PM Peggy Foy, by Diane Rice

Readings for the Week

Monday: Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 41c-62; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Jn 8:1-11

Tuesday: Nm 21:4-9; Ps 102:2-3, 16-18, 19-21; Jn 8:21-30

Wednesday: Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Dn 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; Jn 8:31-42

Thursday: Gn 17:3-9; Ps 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Jn 8:51-59

Friday: Jer 20:10-13; Ps 18:2-3a, 3b-4, 5-6, 7; Jn 10:31-42

Saturday: Ez 37:21-28; Jer 31:10, 11-12abcd, 13; Jn 11:45-56

Sunday: Mt 21:1-11 (procession); Is 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14—27:66 or Mt 27:11-54

Pray for those who are sick...

Pray for those who are sick...

Rosemarie Aulino Eddie Banaag Ronald Blanchini Genevieve Bonk Timothy Brennan Marie Brody Baby Isla-Rose Callahan Ellen Catalina Frank Catalina Darrie Christmas Lisa & Marie DeFeo Mary Dolan Bill Dolphin Dorothy Domenici Mary Eads Ada Galali Emma Gergely Rose Gessner Mary Gidaro John Gross Fr. Doug Haefner Paul Haucke Sloopy Hoffman Sandra Husethe Merla Isabelo Jack Kenefick Michael Kirugi The Littrakis Family

Kenneth Magat Al Maglio Susan Manansala Elizabeth Miller Lucy Mirimns Eleanor Morehouse Ursula Morgenberger Dave Mogyorihna Patricia (Pat) Nese Margaret O’Hare Danny Onchangco Matalida Parafioriti Bernadine Pasternak Jim Pettit

Bill Plaskon Brian Reyes Maria Schwenzer Sr. Mary Amata Shina, OSF Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF Dennis Stuewe Christine Szczepanski Mona Wilson Edward Teager Sr. Jessy, OSF ...and for all who are homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness

Pray for those who have died...

Rosemarie Aulino Eddie Banaag Ronald Blanchini Genevieve Bonk Timothy Brennan Marie Brody Baby Isla-Rose Callahan Ellen Catalina Frank Catalina Darrie Christmas Lisa & Marie DeFeo Mary Dolan Bill Dolphin Dorothy Domenici Mary Eads Ada Galali Emma Gergely Rose Gessner Mary Gidaro John Gross Fr. Doug Haefner Paul Haucke Sloopy Hoffman Sandra Husethe Merla Isabelo Jack Kenefick Michael Kirugi The Littrakis Family

Kenneth Magat Al Maglio Susan Manansala Elizabeth Miller Lucy Mirimns Eleanor Morehouse Ursula Morgenberger Dave Mogyorihna Patricia (Pat) Nese Margaret O’Hare Danny Onchangco Matalida Parafioriti Bernadine Pasternak Jim Pettit

Bill Plaskon Brian Reyes Maria Schwenzer Sr. Mary Amata Shina, OSF Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF Dennis Stuewe Christine Szczepanski Mona Wilson Edward Teager Sr. Jessy, OSF ...and for all who are homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness
Dear Friends,

IS GOD STILL IN CHARGE? This is a question that many may have at this time of unprecedented tribulation in our lives and in the world. Or maybe it’s variations like: Does God care? Why is God doing nothing? etc. I hear some people, including preachers, interpreting this pandemic as a time of God’s judgment because of our sins! They quote Bible verses to prove their point.

I strongly beg to differ as I humbly acknowledge the need for turning to God in repentance as there is sinfulness in me and in all of us. Evil in the world is a reality. Even though certain kinds of evil cannot be fully explained, we know that many of the evils (accidents, sickness, pollutions, violence, killings, etc.) are due to wrong choices people make. The present coronavirus is part of such bad choices, and the continued bad choices made it get out of hand, wreaking havoc around us. The God revealed to us by Jesus Christ is a God of love and compassion. God is not there to punish us but to welcome us as we turn to Him – in good times and in bad. Whether we are in good relationship with Him or not, God wants us to have a life of joy, peace and fellowship with all.

Even when people make bad choices, God brings good out of those. That is God’s promise: “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” (Romans 8:28). There are many Biblical examples of this truth. One of the readings we had for a weekday Mass during this Lent was about the familiar story of Joseph who was hated by his brothers who first threw him into a well and later sold him to some Egyptian merchants (Genesis 37). God used that misfortune for good when it was Joseph who saved the nation of Egypt, the nation of Israel and others, including his own brothers, from a catastrophic famine (Genesis chapters 41-50). Listen to the words Joseph himself says how God used his bad situation for good: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20)

One good this pandemic is already bringing about, is connecting to God as never before. This is an opportunity for us to realize that we are not in charge as we are taught to believe, that our trust in all the capabilities we have – all the most advanced mechanisms, amenities, equipment, weapons, medicine, etc. – are only limited. We acknowledge that there is a greater power who is really in control. Jesus taught us that this higher power is our loving God who wants our happiness by following His path.

We continue to cooperate with our civil and government authorities. All of us are limited with the many restrictions of movement. But we are grateful to God that we can still communicate to our near and dear ones no matter where they are. We are grateful to God that Holy Mass, Reflections and communications are available to us through our parish website and other social media. Let us make maximum use of these for our spiritual nourishment and be happy and hopeful as we take care of ourselves and our dear ones during our stay at home during this time of crisis. Know that Msgr. Curry and myself keep you all in our prayers as we continue to offer daily Mass.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal

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In Answer to Questions Regarding Mass Intentions.

The Mass intentions (see page 3) will be fulfilled as scheduled. Msgr. Curry and I will be following the norms as our Bishop has reminded us all in his latest Directives:

"Since the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life, all priests of the Diocese of Metuchen must celebrate Mass privately for the good of all the Christian faithful entrusted to their care and for all people during this critical time. Priests should celebrate this private Mass even if another priest or deacon cannot be with them to assist. Priests are reminded of the obligation to offer Mass for the intentions of those who have made an offering for the Mass. Weekday and other Masses can still be celebrated to fulfill intentions but, the faithful should not be present." So, I request you to join me in spirit as we will be honoring your Mass intentions daily."

God Bless.

Fr. Abraham Orapankal
Sunday Reflection: Scared to Talk about Death!

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now, I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you . . . " Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" John 11: 1-45

They left the doctor’s office. They were still struggling to take it all in. Tumor . . . surgery . . . chemotherapy . . . a few months. By the next day, the words settled in and became real. Calls were placed; appointments were scheduled; decisions were made. Then a conversation began that took them both by surprise. He asked: "What will you do if I die? Where will you live? Where will you work? Who will care for you?" She had questions of her own: "You’ve never been willing to talk about this, and now I wish you would. Where do you want to be buried? Do you want me to take you home? What kind of funeral do you want?"

And the conversation continued over the next several days. "Would you marry again?" he asked. "I would want you to be happy." She asked, for the first time, detailed questions about all the day-to-day things he took care of. Was there something he wanted to do or a place he wanted to go? Was there any unfinished business that needed to be addressed? A new place opened up in their life together: a safe place to admit, "I’m scared," a hopeful place to constantly assure each other, "Whatever happens, we’ll be OK."

What started as a strained, clumsy conversation became more and more comfortable - and comforting. When she told a close friend about it, she was astonished at her resistance, "You shouldn’t talk that way. That’s giving up. You’ve got to fight!" But she now knew better. Talking about death is not an easy conversation, but it is liberating and freeing; it’s a conversation centered in grace and love. They made it through his surgery and treatment. But the conversation continues in new and revealing ways that strengthen them for the hard days that are sure to come.

A couple confronts for the first time in their lives the reality of death; in today’s Gospel, two sisters suddenly must cope with life without their brother. Every human being shares the prospect of death. Each one of us is on the same journey to the dwelling place of God; as such, every day brings each one of us closer to death, the passage way we all must pass through to God. This truth is brought to our very presence with the corona virus pandemic. We see so many dying worldwide. But in treating one another with the care and compassion that honors the fragility of life, we bring into one another’s lives the hope of eternity in the Risen One who reassures us, “Do not be afraid; I am with you, even to the end of time.” As this couple and Martha and Mary come to appreciate, resurrection is a perspective that finds hope in the hardest times, that uncovers life among the devastation, that reveals the light even in the darkest night.
John and Jim were professional players with the Atlanta Braves who lived and breathed baseball. These guys breathed, discussed, ate, and slept baseball. One of their big concerns was whether there would be baseball in Heaven. They loved baseball so much that they were not sure at all they wanted to spend eternity in heaven unless they could play baseball. They had an agreement that the first one who died would somehow get a message back to earth, letting the other know whether baseball was in heaven or not. Well, it happened. John died, and Jim grieved. He grieved for days - deeply saddened over his friend John’s death. About two weeks went by, and then it happened. Jim was awakened in the middle of the night by the calling of his name, “Jim, Jim, Jim, wake up! This is John.” “John, where are you?” “I’m in Heaven - and I have some good news and bad news. It’s exciting, Jim. We do have baseball in Heaven. It’s great. We play every day and there are marvelous teams, and tough, exciting competition.” “That’s great,” said Jim. “But what’s the bad news?” “Well,” said John, “You are scheduled to pitch next Tuesday.”

While the miracle of raising Lazarus from grave shows Jesus’ Divine power over death itself, it also shows him as a wonderfully sensitive human being. His love for Lazarus and his sisters is palpable. Martha’s and Mary’s complaint that Jesus’ presence would have averted Lazarus’ death shows us how real their friendship was. So do Jesus’ tears. The story also represents the best of that special human quality in Jesus of openly expressing real feelings. The way Jesus consoles the sisters is an example for us not to be afraid because his promise is true: “I am the resurrection and life.”

While we are in home isolation, we can rejoice that we have can be conscious of the presence and protection Jesus gives us. There is only good news for a true disciple, for even what is seen as ‘bad news’ in human terms is something that God turn into good.

Sunday Reflections

Good News and Bad News!

Our Live Lent Groups have explored varied remote ways to connect during these self-distancing times. Many facilitators that I’ve heard from have had success with Zoom. Some have been doing the reflections on their own using emails to connect. Renew International recently offered suggestions. The Five Main Points are:

1. **Online small groups:** the host/organizer needs to know what they are doing; come on early before meeting start time; raise your hand to speak; suggest only 60 minutes online; everyone read the readings prior to meeting
2. **Meeting via conference call:** e.g. FreeConferenceCall.com
3. **Holy and Happy Hour** [my favorite]: done within Sr. Terry’s community — a small group started a “Holy and Happy Hour” — each person had their own hors d’oeuvres on a table at home. Then they did a prayer; it is important to touch base about how everyone is doing.
4. **Weekly check-in:** Might even consider having prayer partners to check in with others. Even simply say an “Our Father” together. Not only responsibility of Facilitators— “We are all leaders”.
5. **Acts of kindness beyond our small groups**

Discovering God: Formation

**Live Lent Update — from Dee Nann**

Please continue to pray for our RCIA Elect (Orchid Santana, Manishka Mishra, Vivian Nguyen, Bri-ana Farrell and Jiselle Zelaya), our RCIA Candidates (Carol Afriyie, Christopher Reyes, Brian Reyes, Katelyn Tejada and Joseph Blay) and our Adults Candidates Being Confirmed (Lilliana Romero, Katherine Romero, Alexandre Dias, Olivia Lopez, Victoria Lopez, Justin Rivera, Raymond Rivera, Ivan Solares, Christian Barnard, Andrew Lavali, Robert Zagata, and Juelz Peralta) as they continue on this journey.
On Wednesday, March 4, our SMS Forensic Team, under the creative leadership of Mrs. Abbott, hosted our First Annual Diocesan Forensics Competition. Thank you to Mrs. Abbott, her team, her judges and our student ambassadors for a most successful venture.

Below is a picture of our team with our visiting forensic friends.

Below is a picture of our team and those members of our team who placed and won trophies in the competition.

St. Matthias School Is In Session!

The administration and the staff of St. Matthias School are actively engaged in the process of remote learning. The teaching staff met weeks ago in preparedness for this pandemic experience in our learning community. Although our buildings are closed, school continues.

Each day students actively communicate with their teachers in their google classroom platform. Our students in the middle school were already accustomed to this mode of student/teacher communication, and our staff and students in the transition grades of 3, 4 and 5 quickly adjusted to this style of learning. Students in the early learning grades respond to the daily lessons the teachers have prepared on their website teacher pages.

We are grateful to parents for supporting this mode of learning. Staff members continue to explore new ways to interact with the students in the learning process. Thank you to everyone for your support of this vital ministry.

Discovering God: Formation

That Discomfort You’re Feeling Is Grief

If the current situation has you feeling discomfort, you might want to read an excellent article just published in Harvard Business Review. The article interviews David Kessler who co-wrote Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’ book on the five stages of grief. Kessler’s new book adds a sixth stage - finding meaning. The article may be read for free at this time. Go to: https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=hbr&utm_medium=social&bclid=1wAR37jMqWfHk5Co7I4Bj6zva-VoG6LgWcjNR2eRhERx6J8M7tS2Og_MEg

If you are reading this bulletin online, you should be able to just click on the above link and have it take you directly to the article.

New Jersey Launches New Webpage to Dispel Rumors and Disinformation

The state of NJ has launched a new webpage to help residents distinguish between facts and rumors. Please visit: https://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/covid19

Unfortunately, during these days when most people are operating “remotely”, the number of phishing attacks has increased significantly. Parishes are again being targeted. As we have mentioned before, if you receive an “urgent” email or text requesting you send money, NEVER send money. If you are concerned that the message may be real, call the person to check; never click on a link inside such a message. And know that if the name of our parish or pastor or staff is used, it is a fake email.
We Have Switched Our Online Giving Platform from Faith Direct 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 Live-Lent 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.

And we have just created a new e-letter — St. Matthias Family Connect. 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.
**Being Good Stewards**

**Stewardship Reflection — Mar 29, 2020:**

“Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?’” (John 11:40)

Many of us say that we believe in God. We go to church on Sunday. We volunteer for events at our parish. But when life gets hard and the pressure is on, when things aren’t going our way, do we really believe and put our trust in the Lord? When we live a life of gratitude, being thankful for the gifts we have been given, we really do see that God is providing all that we need. It opens our hearts to see God’s active presence in our daily lives.

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**Next Weekend (Palm Sunday) is the Annual Collection for our Retired Diocesan Priests**

Presently, there are 28 retired diocesan priests. We have all been blessed to have been the beneficiaries of their sacred ministry: countless Holy Masses, baptisms, weddings and confessions. They bring us the healing hand of Christ at the hour of death and they mourn with us when they bury our dead. All funds raised through this collection will be used exclusively to support our retired priests who reside at the Maria Regina Residence in Somerset.

Your generous response to next week’s special collection is a practical way to convey your personal appreciation to our retired priests for their many years of service. Thank you for your continued generosity and grateful heart.

To donate, please go to our new online giving company — Parish Giving — at: [www.parishgiving.org](http://www.parishgiving.org). Or you may mail in a check or drop it off in the **door slot** of the parish office; mark the check “Retired Priests”. Thank you!

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**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:

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. Matthiast 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!

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**Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

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**Faith Direct/Parish Giving for**

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**Reflexiones — 29 de marzo de 2020**

5º domingo de Cuaresma

“Jesús le dijo: ¿No te dije que si crees verás la gloria de Dios?” (Jn11:40)

Muchos de nosotros decimos que creemos en Dios. Vamos a la iglesia los domingos. Somos voluntarios para eventos en nuestra parroquia. Pero cuando la vida se pone difícil, la presión continúa, cuando las cosas no van por nuestro camino, ¿realmente creemos, realmente confiamos en el Señor? Cuando vivimos una vida de gratitud, agradecidos por los dones que nos han dado, realmente vemos que Dios está proporcionando todo lo que necesitamos. Nos abre los corazones para ver la presencia activa de Dios en nuestra vida diaria.

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**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:

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. Matthiast 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!

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**Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Month</th>
<th>In-Pew Collection/Checks</th>
<th>Online Giving</th>
<th>Weekly Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 2020</td>
<td>$16,965</td>
<td>$10,446.09</td>
<td>$27,411.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8, 2020</td>
<td>$14,765</td>
<td>$10,446.09</td>
<td>$25,211.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15, 2020</td>
<td>$8,527</td>
<td>$10,446.09</td>
<td>$18,973.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22, 2020</td>
<td>$690</td>
<td>$10,446.09</td>
<td>$11,136.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Faith Direct/Parish Giving for**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month-to-date Total</th>
<th>Year-to-date Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$52,230.44</td>
<td>$1,033,507.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cancellation of Carnival 2020 and the Super 50/50

Because of the current medical situation, the Carnival for this year must be cancelled. This includes the super 50/50 raffle. This decision was made to avoid any further expense to the parish for the set up expenses.

We appreciate all of the efforts so many of you have made for the carnival in the past and we pray for your health and well being during this difficult time.

The Night of Winners 2020 Committee is proud to announce that this year’s event raised $55,428 for St. Matthias School! Thank you to everyone who contributed to our incredible success!

Connecting with Our Local Community

New Group in Franklin Township to Help Residents

“Resident Helping Residents” is a newly formed grassroots bipartisan effort to support Franklin township residents who are most vulnerable to the COVID-19 outbreak. Their website allows people to reach out if they have a particular need and can’t/shouldn’t get out because of their medical history. The link below will take you to their website for more information.

We at St. Matthias are happy to spread this news so that younger members of the parish who are at the least risk or young professionals working from home might want to take a few minutes and help those in need in the community, while taking all the precautions in place as per state/government regulations and sound judgment. Visit: https://residentshelpingre.wixsite.com/mysite?fbclid=IwAR0FjtPVcoc_2YBpPf_As35oUQnQiKBOoFmMKjEvKxlnwZUjMdi-SP5olPw

Somerset County Seniors Center News Update

As of the Monday, March 23, 2020, due to the public healthcare emergency, and for the safety of clients and caregivers, all county-operated senior centers are temporarily closed. The Office on Aging & Disability Services is closed to walk-ins, but the staff is available. Those who are seeking assistance can call 908-704-6346 or toll-free 1-888-747-1122. Callers are asked to leave their name, phone number and a brief message, and calls will be returned as soon as possible.

State of New Jersey Job Portal — Thousands of Temporary Workers Needed Immediately

A job portal has been created where multiple businesses across the state need thousands of workers; jobs are open to everyone including those who lost their jobs or have had their hours reduced. Go to: https://jobs.covid19.nj.gov

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

Parish Registration — Welcome new members! Please register in the Parish Office during business hours — 9 AM—9 PM Mon-Thurs, 9 AM -6PM Fri., and 9 AM - 1 PM Sat.

Homebound/Hospital Visitation — We visit St. Peter’s & Robert Wood Johnson Hospital several times. If you have a family member in any area hospital, please call the parish office to let us know.

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.

Monthly Food Collection

On the first Sunday of each month parishioners are asked to bring food items for the Franklin Food Bank.

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).

Mar 29, 2020

www.stmatthias.net