



St. Matthias Parish Office:

Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm.
 168 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873
 732-828-1400, fax: 732-828-0866
www.stmatthias.net

Mass Schedule (in person):

Sat - 5PM, Sun - 8, 10 AM & 12 noon
 M/T/W/Th/F at 8:00AM
 And also on our YouTube channel
youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

St. Matthias School (SMS):

170 JFK Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873
www.stmatthias.info 732-828-1402
 School Office Hours, Mon-Fri 8AM to 3PM.

For all Parish emails, add @stmatthias.net

Pastor: Rev Abraham Orapankal, **abraham**
Senior Priest: Msgr. Seamus Brennan, **sbrennan**
 Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, Business Administrator
mpburke-grospin

Deacon Ron Caimi, *Senior Deacon*
 Kelly Counts, *Receptionist*, **kcounts**
 Deacon Russell Demkovitz, **rdemkovitz**
 Juan Diaz Flores, *Custodian*
 Nathalie Godet, *Website Coordinator*, **ngodet**
 Leslie Guillen, *Bulletin Editor*, **lguillen**
 Amy Hanna, *Accountant/Databases*, **ahanna**
 Mike Lanyi, *Sacristan*
 Sue Lenczewski, *Youth Coordinator*, **SMYLE**
 Mary Jo Loboda, *Parish Staff, Development*,
mjoboda

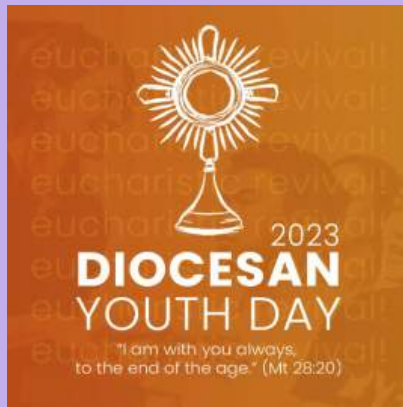
Julio Montero, *Maintenance Supervisor*
 Dolores R. Nann, *Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation*, **dnann**

Vinnie Natale, *Bookkeeper*, **vnatale**
 Silvia Nizama, *Housekeeper*
 Deacon John Radvanski, **deaconjohn**
 Joan Best Seamon, *Pastoral Associate for Music Ministry*, **jseamon**

Sr. Marie Therese Sherwood, *OSF, Pastoral Assoc. for Social Concerns*, **msherwood**
 Trish Stumper, *Parish Support Secretary*,
tstumper

St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)
 Mary Lynch, *Principal*, **mlynch**
 Joseph Gidaro, *Vice Principal*, **igidaro**

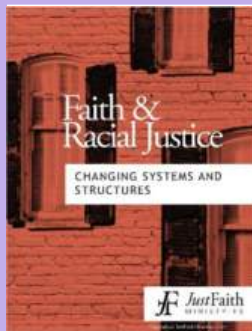
THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS
SUNDAY, FEB 26, 2023-
First Sunday of Lent



Diocesan Youth Day
2023
Sunday March 12, 2023

From 11:30 to 5 pm, youth from all over our diocese will gather, have fun and fellowship with live music and good food, hear a keynote speaker, and celebrate Mass with Bishop Checchio.

More info at: <https://www.diometuchen.org/yyam>



CHANGING SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

Sign up now for the third and last module of the Faith and Racial Justice series

7 Sessions

Saturdays from February 25, 2023 (Retreat) until June 10, 2023

March 4, 18; April 1, 22; May 6, 20; June 3, 10
 (Makeup sessions available for missed sessions)
 9:00 – 11:30 AM (Sessions on Zoom)

Contact program facilitators for more information or email:
matthiasracialjustice@gmail.com

Neil Purcell neil.purcell.nj@gmail.com
 Kerry Millan kerrytheinterim@gmail.com
 Phyllis Stone phylliswstone@aol.com



MASS OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

All who are in need of healing of body, mind or spirit are invited to the celebration of our Mass of Anointing of the Sick: **SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2023 at 11:00 AM.**

This Week @ St. Matthias From Our Pastor

Masses are also livestreamed on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ](https://www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ)

The Church is open for individual prayer

Mon-Fri: 7:30 am to dusk, Sat: 9 am to 6pm, and Sun: 7:30 am to 1 pm, unless another service is taking place.

Women's History Month—Mar 1

Sunday, Feb 26, 2023 Rite of Sending

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	1st Communion #2 at Mass	Church
12:00PM	Mass	Church
4:00PM	SMYLE Mtg.	Cafeteria

Monday, Feb 27, 2023 St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, Confessor

8:00AM	Mass/Miraculous Medal Novena	Church
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Tuesday Feb 28, 2023 St. Hilary, Pope

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:30AM	Home Bound Ministry Mailing	de Porres Rm
7:00PM	Baptism Prep	Zoom
7:15PM	Hand Bell Rehearsal	Church

Wednesday, Mar 1, 2023 St. David of Wales, Bishop

8:00AM	Mass—St. Joseph Novena	Church
9:30AM	Prayer Group 1 Holy Spirit	de Porres Rm
2:30AM	SMS Play Practice	School
7:30PM	Folk Group Rehearsal	Church

Thursday, Mar 2, 2023 St. Agnes of Bohemia, Abbess

8:00AM	Mass	Church
3:30PM	Children's Choir Gr. 3&4	Church
4:00PM	Children's Choir Gr. 5-8	Church
7:30PM	Adult Choir rehearsal	Church
8:00PM	K of C Mtg.	Cafeteria

Friday, Mar 3, 2023 St. Katharine Drexel, Foundress, Sister of the Blessed Sacrament SMS Closed—Fire Inspection All Day

8:00AM	Mass/1st Friday Holy Hour	Church
10:30AM	Mass @ Spring Hill	Off site
7:00PM	Stations of the Cross	Church

Saturday, Mar 4, 2023 St. Casimir, Patron of Poland

3:30PM	Reconciliation	Church
5:00PM	Mass	Church

Sunday, Mar 5, 2023 2nd Sunday of Lent

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
11:00AM	Rosary Altar Soc. Mtg.	John XXIII Rm
12:00PM	Mass	Church
2:00PM	GIFT	Church, clsrms, John XXIII Rm

Bulletin Article Requests:

If you would like to send information to be included in our bulletin, please email it to bulletin@stmatthias.net by 8 AM, MONDAY, 5 business days before the needed bulletin date (earlier for holiday weekends). Approved content is published on a space-available basis.

Dear Friends,

It was great to see so many of our people making an extra effort to begin Lent with the symbol of ashes, reminding us all to “turn away from sin and believe in the gospel.” Besides the distribution of the ashes at the different Masses and the Prayer Service, our unique practice of the “Drive-thru” ministry of ashes also attracted a lot of people who, due to their own particular situation, would not have got the ashes and the message in the little card we gave them. I am grateful to the many volunteers and parish staff who made the drive-thru ministry a success. This is a sign of goodwill from the Church to reach out to those who cannot come to church or those alienated from the church for whatever reason.

As I was reflecting on the different ways of living Lent, I was fascinated by this “If-we-were” reflection a friend sent me:

If we were:

*knives, Lent would be a time to sharpen our cutting edges.
cars, Lent would be a time for an oil change and a tune-up.
swimming pools, Lent would be a time to filter the dirt out of our water.
gardens, Lent would be a time to fertilize our soil and dig out our weeds.
carpets, Lent would be a time to get power-cleaned.
VCRs, Lent would be a time to clean our heads and adjust our tracking.
computers, Lent would be a time to overhaul our disk drive.
highways, Lent would be a time to repair our cracks and fill our potholes.
TV sets, Lent would be a time to adjust our focus and our fine-tuning.
silverware, Lent would be a time to clean away our tarnish.
batteries, Lent would be a time to be recharged.
seeds, Lent would be a time to germinate and reach for the sun.*

But the truth of the matter is that we are none of these things. We are people who sometimes do wrong things, and we need to atone for them. Sometimes we get spiritually lazy - we need to get back into shape; sometimes we become selfish - we need to stretch out of our narrowness and begin giving again; sometimes we lose sight of our purpose on earth and the immense promise within us - we need to regain our vision. And because we are also people who sometimes tend to put those things off, we need a special official time to concentrate on doing them. So we have Lent.

I hope we all have chosen some particular way or ways to spend these 40 days. If not, “Now is the acceptable time,” as St. Paul reminds us (2 Corinthians 6:2). Our small faith-sharing groups have already begun to meet weekly. Anyone is still welcome to drop in and see what it is all about! The Stations of the Cross at 7 pm every Friday of Lent is a devotion worth attending. The reflections are truly relevant and practical. Can we all put that in our Lenten schedule?

I wish us all a happy experience of Lent as we make some Lenten practice these 40 days. Then the Easter candy will taste sweeter, the Easter flowers will bloom more brightly, the Easter Sunday sun will shine more warmly!

Happy and fruitful Lent!

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal



Readings for the Week

Monday: Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Mt 25:31-46

Tuesday: Is 55:10-11; Ps 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19; Mt 6:7-15

Wednesday: Jon 3:1-10; Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19; Lk 11:29-32

Thursday: Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cd-3, 7c-8; Mt 7:7-12

Friday: Ez 18:21-28; Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8; Mt 5:20-26

Saturday: Dt 26:16-19; Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Mt 5:43-48

Sunday: Gn 12:1-4a; Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22; 2 Tm 1:8b-10; Mt 17:1-9

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Feb 25	5:00PM	Intention of Parishioners
Sunday, Feb 26	8:00AM	Sr. Amata Shina, OSF, by Eileen King
	10:00AM	Sally Hughes, by The Family
	12:00PM	Mary Dolan, by The Hentz Family
Monday, Feb 27	8:00AM	Andrea Banaag, by Minda Villarica
Tuesday, Feb 28	8:00AM	Petra Andrade, by The Gavilanes Family
Wednesday, Mar 1	8:00AM	Miguel Andrade, by The Gavilanes Family
Thursday, Mar 2	8:00AM	Pedro Dinglasan, by The Tibay Family
Friday, Mar 3	8:00AM	Nancy Collins, by Marty
Saturday, Mar 4	5:00PM	Frieda Emmer, by Vince & Dee Martell
Sunday, Mar 5	8:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
	10:00AM	Eva Schaare, by The Quenault Family
	12:00PM	Ratna Sintawati Rahardja, by The Sukendro Family

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or **email Kelly Counts** at kcoun@stmatthias.net to add the name to this list. Names will be listed in the bulletin for **6 weeks**. Please let us know if this time period needs to be extended. We want to know how you are doing and want to offer you the support of our prayers. *New people on our prayer list are noted in blue.*

Erika, Jay & Beth Adams
 Carolyn Banghart
 Tammy Baskaran
 Angela Berlund
 Arthur & Regina Berlowitz
 John Blum
 Bishop Paul Bootkowski
 Anthony Brandi
 Barbara Butler
 Bianca Canlas
 Tara Capatosto
 Ellen Catalina
 Kyle Davidson
 Lisa DeFeo
Ann Devlin
 Michael DiMaggio
 William Dolphin
 Vivian Dong
 Claudia Gemgnani

Helen Geraghty
 Emma Gergely
 Mary Gidaro
 Carol Gryskiewicz
 Sloopy & John Hoffman
 Marilyn Horvath
 Baby Isla-Rose Huffman
 Robert Kashinsky
 Al Kepenis
 Kathleen Lanenbacher
 The Litrakis Family
 Mary Lou Litrakis
 John Litrakis
 Jude Raymond Maceren
 Clarissa & Kevin Magat
 Kenneth & Kelly Magat
 Al Maglio
 Susan, Tosh & King
 Manansala

Christine Mathews
 Beatrice May
 Anne McElwee
 Margaret Menendez
 Carol Millemann
 Sabrina Moloney
 Kathlyn Moore
 Eleanor Nagy
 Janice Navatkowski
 Danny Ongchango
 Paul & Doris Paetow
 Fiorello Parente
 Robert Pellegrino
 Jim Pettit
 Christina Pietrowiak
 Kim Price
 Nathan Reavey
 Caitlin Regan
 Doris Regan

Gabriel Rivera
 Jaxon Rivera
 Arina Robinson
 Arthur Robinson
 Maria Schwenzer
 Tippur Seshagiri
 Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF
 Sr. Marie Stemnock
 Jeff Sullivan
 Jay Swick
 Tom Szabo
 Nancy Whelan
 Mark Worthington
 Angie Yetyet

And for all who are ill, homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness, we pray.

Pray for those who have died...

— “His mercy endures forever.” *Chronicles*

Jane Resta

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



There is a story about a lady who was struggling with a temptation as to whether or not to have cosmetic surgery. She was thinking about having a facelift. But it was very expensive. Hence, she was totally confused. While she was discussing its high cost with her husband she said, "But what if I drop dead three months after I have this surgery? Then what would you do?" He thought for a moment and said, "Well, I guess we'd have an open casket for your funeral." 😊

Smart Penance: A priest spied a parishioner enjoying some tasty smoked sausage on Friday during Lent -- a strict no-no in the church. The priest, being a pragmatic soul, told the man for his penance he was to bring a load of lumber to the church to help repair the roof. The man was not happy and he grumbled, but went off to do his penance. He arrived at the church on the next Friday and proceeded to dump a

huge load of sawdust into the parking lot. "What's this?" the priest wanted to know. "I told you your penance was a load of lumber, not sawdust." The man replied coolly, "Well, if that sausage I ate was meat, then this sawdust is lumber."



Giving up what? A man took his young son to a baseball game. While they were sitting there, he asked the boy what he was going to give up for Lent. The boy replied, "I don't know, Dad. May be candy. What are you going to give up?" His father said, "I've thought about this a lot and decided to give up liquor." Later in the game, the beer man came by, and the man ordered a beer. His son objected, "Hey, I thought you were giving up liquor!" His dad answered, "Hard liquor, son. I'm giving up hard liquor. This is just a beer." To which the boy replied, "Well then, I'm giving up hard candy." 😊



Parenting Tune-Up

We just began Lent with a focus on prayer, fasting and almsgiving. This Friday, March 3, is also National Day of Unplugging. Can your family do a "tech fast" - a day without social media, TV or the internet? What kind of homemade fun can you substitute?



Marriage Tune-Up

Lent has just begun but too easily it can go the way of New Year's resolutions - Good idea but soon forgotten. Help each other. If you choose the same practice you can reinforce each other. If you choose different ones support each other's growth - but don't nag. It's not a contest.



Triumph and Tragedy of Mel Gibson

Every one of us knows who Mel Gibson is and how he messed up his life after making *The Passion of the Christ*. It wasn't coincidence. My theory is that he did so much good through this movie that it brought on him a lot of attacks by the evil one as revenge for the spiritual good done by the film. Because he wasn't "careful" enough, or didn't look on what happened to him in his spiritual battlefield, Gibson wasn't ready for battles that came after he had finished the Passion movie. Because of his well-documented paranoia, he repeatedly roared threats to kill his estranged ex-wife of 28 years and burn down her

house. He alludes to having earlier hit her hard enough to break several of her teeth—something he claims she "deserved." Mel's former wife surely knows that not only is Mel a racist, homophobe, misogynist, and anti-Semite, he is a drug and alcohol abuser and a violent or potentially violent man. Why did he have all these tragedies after the great triumph of his career *The Passion of the Christ* which grossed over \$604 million worldwide? Because he ignored Peter's advice, "Stay sober and alert. Your opponent the devil is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, solid in your Faith. (1 Peter 5:8-9a).

Higher the timber, the stronger it is!

A group of mountain hikers came across an old woodsman with an axe on his shoulder. "Where are you going?" they asked him. "I'm headed up the mountain to get some wood to repair my cabin." "But why are you going up the mountain?" they asked incredulously. "There are plenty of trees all around us here." "I know," he said, "but I need strong timber and it grows only on the highest elevations, where the trees are tested and toughened by the weather around them. The higher up you go, the stronger the timber grows." **And that is what God desires for us — that through the winds of trial and the storms of temptation we may grow strong and live on a higher level — strong to resist the devil's urging, strong to serve God, and strong as we stand together in Faith and service to one another. Take my advice — stay close to each other, worship regularly and often, avoid temptation when it comes your way, and fill your hearts with God's word.**

Reflect

Can you give up these for Lent?

GIVE UP grumbling! Instead, "In everything give thanks." Constructive criticism is OK, but "moaning, groaning, and complaining" are not Christian disciplines.

GIVE UP 10 to 15 minutes in bed! Instead, use that time in prayer, Bible study and personal devotion.

GIVE UP looking at other people's worst points. Instead concentrate on their best points. We all have faults. It is a lot easier to have people overlook our shortcomings when we overlook theirs first.

GIVE UP speaking unkindly. Instead, let your speech be generous and understanding. It costs so little to say something kind and uplifting. Why not check that sharp tongue at the door?

GIVE UP your hatred of anyone or anything! Instead, learn the discipline of love. "Love covers a multitude of sins."

GIVE UP your worries and anxieties! Instead, trust God with them. Anxiety is spending emotional energy on something we can do nothing about: like tomorrow! Live today and let God's grace be sufficient.

GIVE UP TV one evening a week! Instead, visit some lonely or sick person. There are those who are isolated by illness or age. Why isolate yourself in front of the "tube?" Give someone a precious gift: your time!

GIVE UP buying anything but essentials for yourself! Instead, give the money to God. The money you would spend on the luxuries could help someone meet basic needs. We are called to be stewards of God's riches, not consumers.

GIVE UP judging by appearances and by the standard of the world! Instead, learn to give up yourself to God. There is only one who has the right to judge, Jesus Christ. (Craig Gates, Jackson, MS, "What to Give up for Lent")

The desert of "but" . . .

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. Matthew 8: 5-11

What will you choose in these three scenarios?

One: The offer is sitting in front of you: a considerably larger salary than you're currently making and a generous benefits package. There's no question that this company wants you — and why shouldn't they? You've worked hard to make your mark in this business — **but** (and there's always a "but") it would mean a lot more time on the road, away from your family. You'd

come home every night with a briefcase of work to tackle after dinner — when you got home in time for dinner. The money would be great, but it would come at the cost of being the kind of spouse and parent you love being.

Two: You're surprised to see their number come up on your phone's screen. You hope they're calling to apologize. You haven't spoken to them since the incident that fractured if not severed your relationship. You miss them and would like to get beyond this — **but** returning their call risks an exchange of even uglier and meaner words.

Three: This kid is a target. He or she just doesn't quite "fit" the school's "culture of cool." It might be their shyness, their demeanor, their accent, their last name, their "look." Whatever their "difference" is the subject of a barrage of cruel jokes and comments on social media. You've kept your distance from all of this — **but** you're finding it harder and harder to negotiate your way between the cyber bullies and their poor target.

Lent begins in the desert region of "but": those isolated times and places in our lives when we struggle to discern what direction we should take: Do we do what the world says is the smart move or do we act in a way consistent with the principles of justice and compassion of our faith? So what is your "desert" this Lent? What "wilderness" is overwhelming you? What challenges are you confronting at this point in your life? During these forty days of Lent, the Spirit of God leads us to rediscover the presence of God in our lives, to walk with Jesus in the landscape of the heart: that space between being famished and being full, between complete darkness and the morning light, between holding on for dear life and knowing the security of solid rock under our feet. May Jesus be our traveling companion this Lent through the desert region of "but"; may his spirit of compassion and his light of wisdom enable us to take on the "tempter" as we seek to live our lives in the fullness of God's grace.

The "fast" lane to Easter

The question is usually *What are we going to give up for Lent?* With the best of intentions, we want to follow Jesus into the desert, imitating his forty days of prayer and fasting — but by Holy Week, it hasn't worked out as we had hoped on Ash Wednesday. So maybe we need to rethink the question and approach: **What do we want to DO this Lent?** And that's where fasting — fasting in the spirit of Jesus — plays a part. The saints and prophets of Scripture fasted in order to focus their full attention on the things of God, to center their hearts and spirits on God's presence in their midst. In today's Gospel, Jesus fasts before beginning his public ministry of teaching and healing: his 40-day wilderness experience is his time alone with God to discern exactly what God is calling him to do.

Cont'd on next page

Reflect

The “fast” lane to Easter (cont’d)

So let’s take on “fasting” not for the sake of mortification or penance but to focus our time and energy on more meaningful and fulfilling things in our lives. At the outset, it’s important to understand that dieting is NOT fasting:

The dieter skips food because *I’m eating too much and it’s bad for me*. But the faster says *Food is good but I’m hungry for something more fulfilling*.

The dieter turns off the TV because *It’s boring and my streaming bill is too high*. But the faster says *There are more inspiring and enriching things I could be watching*.

The dieter says *I’m spending too much money on stuff. I can’t afford it*. The faster says *I can use my money to help others who have so much less than I have*.

Lent calls us to fast not from something because it is bad but to fast from something for something better.

And Lenten fasting does not have to be food. We can fast from things that entertain or amuse us in order to make time for works that stretch our souls and lift our spirits.

We can fast from shopping for the latest, the biggest and the most impressive so we can share our blessings with those for whom simple everyday survival is a constant struggle.

We can fast from our over-scheduled calendar to rediscover our family.

We can fast from anger, impatience and our need to be in control enabling us to heal broken relationships and bring peace again to our family or community.

The Lenten desert calls us to fast from status, self-interest and entitlement in order to stand with the poor, the abused, the lost and the forgotten.

These 40 days before Easter invite us to “fast” from whatever deters us from being centered fully in the great love of God that is especially present to us in this Lenten springtime.

Fasting is more than just not eating. It’s about hungering. It’s about emptying our lives of the things that fill — but fail to fulfill — our lives. Lent is the season for such meaningful and focused fasting — “fasting” not just for the sake of “giving something up” but for putting aside whatever derails or hampers our relationship with God and estranges us from others. Such fasting can be a powerful reminder of our need for God, of our need for redemption; it can be the beginning of transforming our lives from a stressful, frustrating struggle to make everything work to finding peace in discovering exactly what is genuinely important and fulfilling. Fasting can also be a beautiful means of expressing thanks to God from whom all good things

Cont’d

come. Meaningful Lenten fasting enables us to go off into the “wilderness” and take a hard look at the choices we are making in our lives and the values upon which we actually live our lives, without the distractions that steal our attention and energy away from the things of God.

Lent and testing in life

Ours is a vibrant culture, always in pursuit of happiness. Death is an obscenity, hidden by cascades of flowers and relegated to remote burial lawns on the edge of town. Sin is denied, camouflaged, psychoanalyzed, and repressed—not confessed. We don’t really sin. We make mistakes of judgment. If a popular politician lies, he or she is *only being human*. Lent is a time to look at such temptations, sin and the consequences. Originally Lent was the season when those about to be baptized repented of their sins and sought to know the Lord Jesus more intimately. Then it became a season for the baptized to do the same. We are challenged to die to sin so that we may rise again to the new life in Christ. Since the Church begins the season with a reflection on the origins of sin among us, the main themes in today’s readings are temptation, sin, guilt and forgiveness. We are told of the temptations offered to our Lord, submission to which would have destroyed his mission. Today’s readings give us the notion that testing comes to us by an agency apart from and in opposition to God. But the truth is that, while testing comes from the outside, temptation comes from within ourselves. However, the good news is that, though we are tempted and often succumb, God’s grace provides the way of salvation for us. The ultimate temptations in life are NOT those that only push us to “do” things we aren’t supposed to “do”; rather they are the ones that push us to “be” persons we weren’t made to be.

Announcement

 The Catholic Community
of St. Matthias - a Proud Sponsor of



Pray



The St. Matthias Rosary Altar Society

will meet on the first Sunday in March, March 5th, following the 10 AM Mass. We will meet in the St. John XXIII Room to pray the rosary. Light refreshments will be served and a short meeting will take place.

Baptisms

The Catholic Community of St. Matthias welcomes the following children who were baptized in **January 2023**. We support them with prayers and ask their parents to nurture them so they can grow to be faith-filled people of God and our parish community.



Hazel Grace Bignell

Emily Elizabeth Ellmyer

River Arthur Robert Janos

Eliza Roisín Ponce

Luca Joseph Sidwell

Learn



More Testimonies from our Parishioners

Here's what our own parishioners have said about their experience of the small groups.

We get so much from each weekly gathering. It strengthens us for the week.

Not having prep work/homework helps me to feel comfortable, to participate.

Getting to know fellow parishioners on a personal level and hearing from about their own experiences. Helps me to prepare better for Mass.

It's fun. There is time for stories. Helps us to be better Christians. Wish there were more sessions. I liked that we met in a home and that there was some structure but also flexibility. I liked that we all had the opportunity to share.

Getting to know my fellow brothers and sisters and share in their journey of life and faith meeting new people that are also fellow parishioners and sharing your thoughts and reflections from our Bible readings.

Prayerful insight, humble sharing, mutual respect and fellowship. We miss the desserts!

Aren't these great comments? Why not sign up? Call Dee Nann at 732-828-1400 or email her at:

dnann@stmatthias.net



"IN CELEBRATION OF 60 YEARS A FUNDRAISER FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR CHURCH"

As you know, the 60th Anniversary celebration of our church began in May of 2022. We had various celebrations including two special Masses, a parish picnic, and a Music Ministry concert. To make this anniversary a special event, we are planning to make the much-needed improvements to our wonderful church. The initial projects we selected were based on the results of a parish survey in which so many of our parishioners participated.

To fund these projects, we are launching the "In Celebration of 60 Years, A Fundraiser For The Future of Our Church", with the modest goal to raise at least \$ 200,000. (This fundraiser is distinct from the Building, Repair and Replacement Fund quarterly collection we had begun last year, which is intended for smaller routine maintenance needs.). This being our 60th Anniversary, please consider donating \$60, or any multiple of 60, or whatever you can give to this cause. All the parishioners will be getting a letter with more details about this fundraiser.

Thank you.

Fr. Abraham Orapankal	Joan Pritchard,	Dolores Christmas,	Edna Argüello-Hitchner
Pastor		Co-Chairs	



Part-Time Evening General Maintenance Person

St. Matthias is looking for a **part-time evening general maintenance person**.

This employee will be responsible for maintaining the safety and cleanliness of the church/school. Please contact:

Mary Pat Burke-Grospin at: mpburke-grospin@stmatthias.net or (732) 828-1400 ext.121.

Learn



BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT ST. MATTHIAS – FEBRUARY 2023

In our final article for Black History Month, the St. Martin de Porres Society would like to share history in the making specifically as it pertains to what matters to many Black Catholics today.

The National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC) continues its historic tradition with the XIII Congress in Baltimore, MD this coming July, 2023. The very first Congress, held in 1889, included a Mass celebrated by the Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, the first U.S. Black Catholic priest whose cause for sainthood is now being considered. Five Congresses were held before the turn of the century, and then the movement was revived with National Black Catholic Congress VI held in 1987, where the speakers included Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration and dynamic evangelist who died of cancer in 1990 and whose cause for canonization is also underway. This year's theme, "Write the Vision: A Prophetic Call to Thrive," is in keeping with the congress movement as a mechanism

to create priorities that will become the pastoral plan (of NBCC) for the next five years. The Congress is the largest national gathering in support of Black Catholic ministry and brings together lay people, clergy and religious for prayer, dialogue and discernment.

St. Matthias will host a preliminary retreat on April 22 from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm in the St, John XXIII Room. The retreat will serve as input from the Diocese of Metuchen to a national pastoral plan reflective of voices of the lay faithful, and will focus on repairing the effects of racism in the Catholic Church, backlash against "minority-majority" demographic trends, the drifting of Black Catholics away from the Catholic Church, and other serious challenges limiting the ability of Black Catholics to thrive in the Church. All Are Welcome to attend the retreat no matter your race, creed or color. There is no charge to attend however, registration is required. www.diometuchen.org/2023nbc

(cont'd next week)

Connect

DO YOU NEED THESE 5 ELEMENTS FOR YOUR LIFE?

You can still join a Lenten Small Group: Here are five benefits that happen in any faith-sharing group:

Prayer: Prayer is the foundation of our Christian life and for that reason we both begin and end our small Christian community gatherings with set times for prayer. Just as the leader is encouraged to prayerfully prepare before the meeting, so too, the leader is urged to encourage the small community members to pray in preparation.

Learning: At a small community meeting, a passage from sacred Scripture is read. Members listen attentively to hear what God is saying at this moment in their lives. They have prepared by reading the scripture and the commentary beforehand. Now they move to a deeper level of learning by connecting the Scripture with their lives.

Faith Sharing: The heart of small Christian community meetings is faith sharing. Faith sharing is sharing some facet of one's relationship with God or connecting a personal event with a passage of Scripture or an aspect of our Christian faith.

Mutual Support: As small community members share and get to know one another, relationships naturally form and people begin to support one another in prayer as well as in other ways. Whether it is support through a crisis or an ongoing support of knowing there are others who share your desire to live the Christian life.

Mission: In his Letter, St. James reminds us to "be doers of the Word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves" (1:22). As a response to the Word of God and the shared word among the small community members, there is always an invitation to respond. Ideally the response ought to flow from the Word and the sharing. Action does not necessarily mean adding on "something else." It means following God's call to live our faith. Through the faith-sharing experience, communities grow in their awareness of their own gifts and in their ability to put them at the service of the Mission in a variety of ways.

Connect

Interested in a new Ministry?

A few faith-filled men and women of our parish have initiated a new ministry, (St. Matthias Martha Ministry) with the desire for following Jesus' example to serve others by providing an opportunity to be part of the church community through active care of our worship space. The mission of the St. Matthias Martha Ministry is to enhance the beauty of the worship space, to create an atmosphere whereby the assembly may heighten their awareness of the purpose and mystery of God through the senses and thus enhance appreciation of the various liturgical seasons in collaboration with the parish staff. The atmosphere of reverence and beauty reflect the glory of God. Thus the worshippers who come to our church,

especially for the weekend Masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals will be welcomed into a pleasing environment.

We are looking for anyone with good will to help and time to volunteer. Teams rotate so time is minimal. Those with creativity and/or experience and imaginative ideas to decorate are welcome.

If you feel called to this ministry, please come to a "kick-off" meeting on Tuesday, February 21 immediately following the 8 AM Mass. For more information, please call Claudette Gaspard 732-406-4118 (Environment) email: gaspard17@aol.com or Nancy Inzano (Altar Linens). 732-261-2530. E Mail: nancy.inzano@gmail.com

Give (and Receive!)

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023				Last Year's To-
	In-Pew/Mail	Parish Giv-	Weekly Total	Weekly Total
Week 32 - Feb. 5, 2023	\$9,108.44	\$18,094.75	\$27,203.19	\$31,073.75
Week 33 - Feb. 12, 2023	\$12,048.00	\$22,434.25	\$34,482.25	\$27,060.25
Week 34 - Feb. 19, 2023	\$8,604.00	\$12,849.11	\$21,453.11	\$26,116.35
Week 35 - Feb. 26, 2023	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,800.14
			Month-to-date	Feb Total Last
Collection: Victims of Turkey/Syria earthquakes -			\$83,138.55	\$103,050.49
\$5,874.00			Current Year-to-	Year-to-date as
			\$919,239.27	\$896,976.57

Stewardship Reflection Feb 26, 2023 1st Sunday of Lent

"It is written: 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.'" Matthew 4:10

Tempted between the riches and power of this world and service to God, Jesus chose service to His Father. If we wish to truly follow Jesus, we, too, must decide to turn away from worldly power and riches and put God at the center of our lives. Lent is our time to prune ourselves of earthly things, and develop and nurture heavenly things. Lent is time to repent and let go of the other "gods" we have put before God.

Reflexiónese 26 de febrero de 2023 1^{er} domingo de Cuaresma

"Está escrito: 'Adora al Señor tu Dios y sírvele solamente a él'" MATEO 4:10

Tentado a elegir entre las riquezas y el poder de este mundo y el servicio a Dios, Jesús eligió servir a Su Padre. Si queremos realmente seguir a Jesús, nosotros también debemos decidir alejarnos del poder y las riquezas mundanas y poner a Dios en el centro de nuestras vidas. La cuaresma es nuestro tiempo para reducir nuestras cosas terrenales, y desarrollar y cultivar las cosas celestiales. La cuaresma es el tiempo para arrepentirse y dejar ir a los otros "dioses" que hemos puesto delante de Dios.

Serve

LAZARUS MINISTRY--Welcoming new members

The Lazarus Ministry began in 1996. Its existence grew out of a need for the Catholic Community of St. Matthias to offer support to our parishioners at the time of loss of a family member. Our service includes attendance at the Funeral masses and Viewing to offer support by our presence. If you are interested in this Ministry, please contact:

Sister Marie Therese: msherwood@stmatthias.net

Serve



Phone Ministry to Our Home Bound Parishioners

If any of our homebound parishioners and their caregivers would like to receive a caring, friendly phone call periodically from one of our parishioners, please contact Sister Marie Therese at:

msherwood@stmatthias.net



Alzheimer's Support Group Meeting

The Alzheimer's Association and Saint Matthias Catholic Church are co-hosting a monthly Support Group for people living with Alzheimer's and Dementia and their care partners. Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, March 8th, from 2 pm-3 pm** on Zoom. Registration is required. To register, call 800-272-3900 and mention the St. Matthias group.

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

Connect with Our Local Community



The Cursillo 13th Annual Encounter with Christ

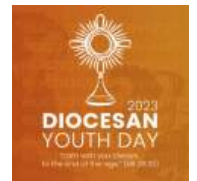
The Cursillo 13th Annual Encounter with Christ will be held at Mary, Mother of God Parish, 157 South Triangle Rd, Hillsborough, on **Saturday, March 4, 2023** from 8:30am to 12:30pm. Our speakers will be **Fr. Cyril Adim Offiong, SDV** (St Cecelia Church, Iselin and **Dcn. Sal Bonfiglio, OFS** (Mary Mother of God Church, Hillsborough. The theme will be "Let your face shine on your servant, save me in your unfailing love". As we prepare our hearts during the season of Lent, let us be reminded of God's love and mercy, even as we struggle through the challenges in our lives. There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation; as well as celebration of the Mass.

There is no charge for the event; but a free will offering will be accepted. **ALL ARE WELCOME.**

Please register at:

<http://www.metcursillo.org/events-encounter.htm>

Diocesan Youth Day 2023 March 12th from 11:30am - 5pm St. Thomas Aquinas High School



Theme: Eucharistic Revival!

- The day will begin with check-in at 11:30 AM and begin promptly at 12 noon and run until 5:00 PM.
- All High School aged teens are welcome!
- Sunday Mass with Bishop Checchio.
- Featuring Keynote speaker, Fr. Malachy Joseph Napier, CFR a selected Eucharistic Preacher from the USCCB's National Eucharistic Revival. **For more information to register: <https://www.diometuchen.org/yyam>**

Parish Leadership

Parish Pastoral Council:

Co-Chairs:

Rose Peng, rosepeng@optonline.net
John Taylor, jptaylor1068@yahoo.com

Co-Secretaries:

Frank Rees
Marilyn Wegg
Stephan Busono
Anne Marie Francis
Bill Isele
Maria Tapia-Burch

Msgr. Seamus Brennen,
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Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

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Parish Finance Council:

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Finance Council
@stmatthias.net
Carmen Driz-Melilli
Barry Dusault
Gwen Orłowski

Audrey Francis
Joe Porter
Joan Pritchard
Mary Pat Burke-Grospin,
Ex-Officio
Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

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

Parish Registration — Welcome to St. Matthias! Please register on our website. www.stmatthias.net/join-us, or visit the Parish Office.

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

Baptism — Baptismal Preparation Sessions are held four times a year for registered parishioners. Please contact the parish office before the baby is born. The sacrament of Baptism is celebrated on the second and fourth Sunday of each month, except during Lent.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) - If you are interested in becoming a Catholic or completing the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist, please call the Parish Office.



St. Matthias School is a PreK3 through 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.



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event dates

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October 2022

- Tuesday, 10/04
- Tuesday, 10/11
- Tuesday, 10/18
- Tuesday, 10/25

November 2022

- Tuesday, 11/01
- Tuesday, 11/08
- Tuesday, 11/15
- Tuesday, 11/29

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