



# ST. MATTHIAS CHURCH

*All are Welcome*

### 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](http://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](https://youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ)

### St. Matthias School (SMS):

170 JFK Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873  
[www.stmatthias.info](http://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*  
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, *Par. Support Secretary*, **tstumper**

### St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)

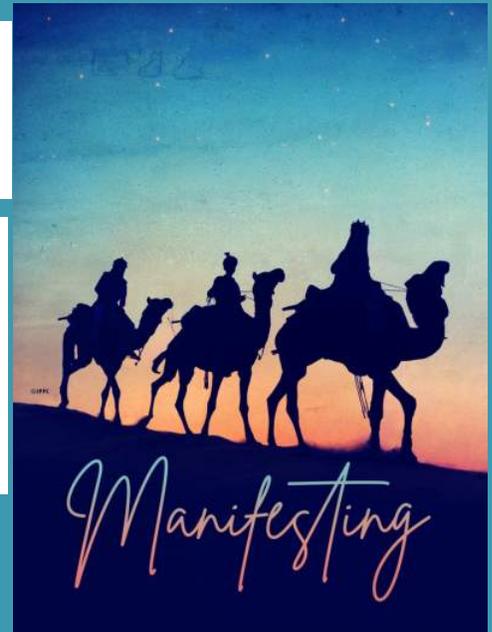
Mary Lynch, Principal, **mlynch**  
Joseph Gidaro, Vice Principal, **jgidaro**

## THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS SUNDAY, JAN 8, 2023- The Epiphany of the Lord

Today's second collection, **TOGETHER IN CHARITY**, will benefit Catholic Charities' Parish Emergency Assistance Fund.

**Sunday, January 8, 2023  
The Epiphany of the Lord**

**After the 12:00 Noon Mass,  
please enjoy the Franklin High  
School Madrigals at 1:15pm in  
the Church**



## St. Matthias School Winter Open House Sunday, Jan. 29th



Join us **Sunday, January 29th**, for our annual Winter Open House during national Catholic Schools Week. We will begin with a Mass at 10 a.m.

**All parishioners, alumni, and current families are invited to come after Mass to tour and see the students' work and school.**

**The Mass will be followed by an Open House of our school from 11 to 1.** During the Open House, you will be able to meet the faculty along with student and parent ambassadors. Information will be available, as well as tours of the facilities. You can even arrange to have your child be a Mustang for a Day. We welcome families of all denominations. Tuition assistance may be available. If you have any questions about this exciting event, please feel free to call our Main Office at 732-828-1402.

**We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, January 29th!**



**Today we welcome members of the Deaf Community to our 10 AM Mass with sign language interpreter. On the 2nd Sunday of each month at the 10 AM Mass, we will have this service.**



Please select **St. Matthias Church/School** as your charity on Amazon Smile. You only need to do this once. Then always shop at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com), and we will automatically receive a portion of the purchase total. Thank you!

## This Week @ St. Matthias From Our Pastor

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

### Sunday, Jan 8, 2023 Epiphany of the Lord Together in Charity Collection

8:00AM Mass Church  
10:00AM Mass -Sign Language Interpreter Church  
12:00PM Mass Church  
1:15PM FHS Madrigals Perform Church  
2:00PM GIFT Church, Clsrms, St. John XXIII Rm

### Monday, Jan 9, 2023 Feast—Baptism of the Lord

8:00AM Mass/ Miraculous Medal Novena Church

### Tuesday Jan 10, 2023 St. William of Bourges, Bishop

8:00AM Mass Church  
6:30PM GIFT Church, Clsrms, John XXIII  
7:00PM Racial Justice Initiative Mtg. Zoom

### Wednesday, Jan 11, 2023 St. Theodosius the Cenobiarch, Abbot

8:00AM Mass—St. Joseph Novena Church  
9:30AM Prayer Group 1 Holy Spirit de Porres Rm  
2:00PM Alzheimer's Mtg. Zoom  
6:00PM SMS Finance Council de Porres Rm  
7:00PM SMDP Mtg. Zoom

### Thursday, Jan 12, 2023 St. Bernard of Corleone, Religious

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

### Friday, Jan 13, 2023 St. Hilary, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

8:00AM Mass Church

### Saturday, Jan 14, 2023 St. Devasahayam, 1st Indian layman to be conferred sainthood

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

### Sunday, Jan 15, 2023

8:00AM Mass Church  
10:00AM Mass Church  
12:00PM Mass Church



#### Bulletin Article Requests:

If you would like to send information to be included in our bulletin, please email it to [bulletin@stmatthias.net](mailto: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,

Happy Feast of Epiphany! That word, in its Greek origin, refers to God's revelation to humans. Today we focus on the wise men or magi who later legends have named as Melchior, Casper and Balthazar. They may have been of noble birth, educated, wealthy, and influential. Whether we agree or not with the non-biblical descriptions about them, one thing is certain: they had apparently studied the Hebrew Scriptures, in particular, the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. They knew the words of Balaam: "A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17). They certainly were acquainted with the prophecy of Micah: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2; see also Matthew 2:5, 6). They probably also knew and understood the time prophecy of Daniel regarding the appearance of the Messiah (see Daniel 9:25, 26). Their study of the Scriptures led them to the Messiah and they adored him.

Reading and praying the Scriptures is the surest way to know the Messiah. "The more we seek him, the more we find him..." a famous worship song declares. The wise men must be admired for their willingness to spend their time, inconveniencing themselves a lot, in order to find Jesus and worship him. Decision to read the Bible daily is an excellent New Year resolution that can still be made on this second Sunday of 2023.

May be today is the right time to ask: Did we begin the New Year in the right spirit? St. Paul gives an excellent piece of advice he practiced himself: "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13). The spirit he advocates is to be forward-looking at the possibilities that we have in the call of God in Christ Jesus.

"Forgetting what lies behind" is an invitation to not dwell on the past failures, hurts and wrong choices but to learn from them in the light that Jesus brings into our lives. No doubt our desire is to be better persons, to live better lives, to make more healthy choices and to live with all in harmony and peace. "Straining forward to what lies ahead" is the promise of the fulfillment of our longings in Jesus. As we celebrate Epiphany today, let us remember that the wise men reached their goal because they strained forward to what lay ahead. Their guide was the star that led them from the beginning of their quest. We too need to keep our eyes on the star and should take care that we don't lose focus.

It is said that New Year's Day is "the first blank page of a 365 page book." Obviously, we all desire to write good things in that book. As we enter the second week, can we be happy and proud of what we already wrote in the first seven pages of this book?

Your brother in Christ,  
Fr. Abraham Orapankal



## Readings for the Week

**Monday:** Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Acts 10:34-38; Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10; Mt 3:13-17

**Tuesday:** Heb 2:5-12; Ps 8:2ab, 5, 6-7, 8-9; Mk 1:21-28

**Wednesday:** Heb 2:14-18; Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9; Mk 1:29-39

**Thursday:** Heb 3:7-14; Ps 95:6-7c, 8-9, 10-11; Mk 1:40-45

**Friday:** Heb 4:1-5, 11; Ps 78:3, 4bc, 6c-7, 8; Mk 2:1-12

**Saturday:** Heb 4:12-16; Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Mk 2:13-17

**Sunday:** Is 49:3, 5-6; Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10; 1 Cor 1:1-3; Jn 1:29-34

## Mass Intentions for the Week

<b>Saturday, Jan 7</b>	5:00PM	Intention Of Parishioners
<b>Sunday, Jan 8</b>	8:00AM	Mary Haney, by Ellen & Paul Junas
	10:00AM	Victoria Moreno, by The Walter Family
	12:00PM	Russell Mulholland, by Joan Pritchard & John Mulholland
<b>Monday, Jan 9</b>	8:00AM	Mary Dolan, by Ellen Junas
<b>Tuesday, Jan 10</b>	8:00AM	Denzil & Pricilla Thrope, by Judith Adams
<b>Wednesday, Jan 11</b>	8:00AM	Bert Maglio, by Mom, Dad, Pete & Sue
<b>Thursday, Jan 12</b>	8:00AM	Oliva Encalada, by The Gavilanes Family
<b>Friday, Jan 13</b>	8:00AM	Kathleen M. Smyth, by Marty Collins
<b>Saturday, Jan 14</b>	5:00PM	Paul Hughes, by The Family
<b>Sunday, Jan 15</b>	8:00AM	Dominic Francisco, by Luisa Bandong
	10:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
	12:00PM	Marion Fischer, by Mary Sullivan



## Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or **email Kelly Counts** at [kcounts@stmatthias.net](mailto: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. *New people on our prayer list are noted in blue.*

Erika, Jay & Beth Adams  
 Carolyn Banghart  
 Tammy Baskaran  
 Angela Berlund  
 Arthur & Regina Berlowitz  
 Anthony Brandi  
 Bianca Canlas  
 Tara Capatosto  
 Ellen Catalina  
 Kyle Davidson  
 Lisa DeFeo  
 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 Lagenbacher  
 The Litrakis Family  
 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  
 Nathan Reavey  
 Caitlin Regan  
 Doris Regan  
 Gabriel Rivera  
 Jaxon Rivera

Arina Robinson  
 Arthur Robinson  
 Maria Schwenzer  
 Tippur Seshagiri  
 Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF  
 Jeff Sullivan  
 Jay Swick  
 Tom Szabo  
 Nancy Whelan  
 Mark Worthington

*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*

Michael Siliwono, Mildred DeRasmi

## Reflect



### Smile with Your Family



**"I want the big cow!":** This is how an excited little girl told her version of the three wise men: The first two wise men got down from their camels and offered their precious gifts to the Baby. But the Baby declined them. When he declined the gift of the third also, the exasperated wise man asked, "Then what do you want?" Then Baby Jesus answered quickly and with a warm smile, "Your big cow!" 😊

A husband asked his wife, "Why would God give the wise men a star to guide them?" She replied, "Because God knows men are too proud to ask directions." 😊

A pastor's wife was preparing pancakes for her young sons. The boys began to argue over who would get the

first pancake. Their Mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, "Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait." The oldest boy turned to his younger brother and said, "You be Jesus." 😊

Math teacher: If I have three bottles in one hand and two in the other hand, what do I have? Student: A drinking problem 😊

"Anyone want to buy some exercise equipment? I'm having a going-out-of-fitness sale." 😊

"I decided to sell my vacuum cleaner. All it was doing was gathering dust." 😊

### Daring to imagine the future ...

**"We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."** Matthew 2: 1-12



In the Ukrainian city of Odessa, the couple stood before the magistrate in a wedding hall. Six family members were there to witness their vows. Despite a city of dirty piles of sandbags blocking empty streets, the constant blare of air raid sirens, and the critical shortages of water and electricity, the couple managed to arrange their wedding, including a dress for the bride, photographs and a wedding dinner. For the first time in many months, the dread of uncertainty of the war gave way to anticipation.

The bride's cousin remembers of that fall day: "I came to realize that weddings are a promise to the future, a public vow of a shared life. At a time when making plans seems to be a luxury few Ukrainians can afford, someone in my family was willing to take that risk, to prove that life could not be reduced to stockpiling candles and pasta . . . "The wedding was proof that my cousin and her fiancé believe the future was worth thinking about, and their hope was contagious. I wanted a day not only for them and for those of us who were present, but also for the people we loved who were not there. By dressing up and celebrating, we refused to let violence control every aspect of our lives . . . "We spoke about the war only in hushed voices, as if it were an obscenity — as if we didn't notice the missing friends. Out loud, we made promises for the future."

**In every moment of humble love, in every courageous act of justice in the face of evil, in every conviction of**

**hope challenging debilitating fear, the Spirit of God "descends" and moves among us, enabling God's grace to transform and heal and re-create. As the Spirit descends upon Jesus at his baptism by John, God's Spirit descends upon this couple as they make their wedding vows living signs of hope for their fellow Ukrainians. The Spirit of God speaks to us in the deepest and most hidden part of our hearts of the love and compassion of God; it is the very life of God animating us and leading us; it is a wellspring of grace and wisdom, of courage and perseverance, enabling us to become the people of justice, peace and goodness God created us to be.**

### **"Because you never know what's going to happen next."**

A survey was made among school children asking the question why they enjoyed reading Harry Potter novels and watching Harry Potter movies. The most common answer was, "Because you never know what's going to happen next." This sense of suspense and surprise prompted us to watch the seven episodes of the Star War movies. The same desire for epiphany with the thrill and suspense awaiting them prompted adults to watch James Bond films and encouraged the great explorers like Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus to make risky and adventurous journeys. It is the same curiosity which led the magi to follow the star of Bethlehem. An element of suspense marked every moment in the journey of the Magi, who never knew what road the Spirit of God was going to take them down next. Today's readings invite us to have the same curiosity as explorers and movie fans do, so that we may discover the "epiphany" or manifestation or Self-revelation of our God in everyone and every event, everywhere.





## History of Epiphany

Next to Easter, Epiphany is the oldest season of the Church year. In Asia Minor and Egypt, Epiphany was observed as early as the second century. The Festival of

the Epiphany fell (and still falls), on January 6. It was observed as a unitive festival -- both the birth and Baptism of Jesus were celebrated at this time. January 6 was chosen as Epiphany Day because it was the winter solstice, a pagan festival celebrating the birthday of the sun god. In 331 AD the solstice was moved to December 25, but January 6 continued to be observed. Christians substituted Epiphany for the solstice. The emphasis was upon the re-birth of light. In keeping with this time, the First Lesson for Epiphany Day is appropriate: "Arise, shine; for your light has come." The unitive Festival of Epiphany was divided when December 25 was chosen as the birthday of Jesus. The Church in the East continued to celebrate Epiphany in terms of the Baptism of Jesus while the Western church associated Epiphany with the visit of the Magi. For the East the Baptism of Jesus was more vital because of the Gnostic heresy claiming that only at his baptism did Jesus become the Son of God. On the other hand, to associate Epiphany with the Magi is appropriate, for the Magi might not have gotten to Bethlehem until a year after Jesus' birth. By this time the holy family was in a house rather than in a stable. If this was the case, then the Magi could not have been a part of the manger scene popularly portrayed in today's Christmas scenes and plays. The Vatican II lectionary and calendar combine the two by placing the visit of the Magi on Epiphany Day and the Baptism of Jesus on Epiphany 1 (The First Sunday after the Epiphany).

## Adventurers

When pilots **Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager** made their historic flight in 1986 with their spindly Voyager aircraft, the whole world followed it with excitement. For nine days a sky-watch was kept tracking their first non-stop global flight without refueling. Achievers and risk-takers like Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager have always fascinated us.

**Marco Polo** journeying to India and China, **Christopher Columbus** coming to America, **Admiral Byrd** going to the South Pole, our **Astronauts** flying to the moon: such adventurers have always aroused our admiration and our skepticism. – It was no different at the time of the Magi in today's Gospel story. To the cynical observer the

Magi must have seemed foolish to go following a star.

These astrologers had to be a little crazy leaving the security of their homeland to venture forth into a strange country presided over by a madman like Herod. Nevertheless, to the person with the eyes of Faith, the Magi had discovered an immense secret. They found not only the secret of the star but the secret of the whole universe – the secret of God's incredible love for his people. For the Child they found was no ordinary child but the very Son of God become man.

## Exegesis: The Magi and the Star

The *Magi* were not Kings, but a caste of Persian priests who served Kings, using their skills in interpreting dreams and watching movements of stars. The sixth century Italian tradition, that there were three Magi, Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior, is based on the fact that three gifts are mentioned in Matthew's Gospel: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Magi may actually have been Persian priests or Babylonian astronomers or Nabataean spice-traders. Eventually, however, they were pictured as representatives of different peoples and races. The Orthodox Church holds that the Magi consisted of twelve Kings, corresponding in number to the twelve tribes of Israel. Commentary on the Torah by Jewish rabbis suggested that a star appeared in the sky at the births of Abraham, Isaac and Moses. Likewise, in the Book of Numbers (24: 17), the prophet Balaam speaks of "*a star that shall come out of Jacob.*" Stars were believed to be signs from God, announcing important events. Thus, the brightness of the Light to which kings were drawn was made visible in the star they followed. They were led by God's power to Christ and brought gifts to him and his family—to Mary and Joseph—as Isaiah and the psalmist foresaw.



## Exegesis: The three gifts

**Gold, frankincense and myrrh** may be thought of as prophesying Jesus' future, gold representing his kingship as well as divinity, frankincense a symbol of his priestly role, and myrrh a prefiguring of his death and embalming.

**Gold** was a gift for Kings, accepting baby Jesus as the king of the Jews. Gold is also a symbol of Divinity and is mentioned throughout the Bible. Pagan idols were often made from gold and the Ark of the Covenant was overlaid with gold (Exodus 25:10-17). The gift of gold to the Christ Child was symbolic of His Divinity—God in flesh.

**Frankincense** is highly fragrant when burned and was therefore used in worship, where it was burned as a pleasant offering to God (Exodus 30:34). Frankincense is a symbol of holiness and righteousness. The gift of frankincense to the Christ Child was

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# Reflect

## Exegesis: The three gifts (cont'd.)

symbolic of his willingness to become a sacrifice, wholly giving himself up, analogous to a burnt offering.

**Myrrh** was used by the High Priest as an anointing oil (Ex. 30:23) Myrrh was used in ancient times for embalming the bodies of the dead before burial. It was a fitting "gift" for Jesus who was born to die. It was also sometimes mingled with wine to form an article of drink. Matthew 27:34 refers to it as "gall." Such a drink was given to our Savior when he was about to be crucified, as a stupefying potion (Mark 15:23). Myrrh symbolizes bitterness, suffering, and affliction. The baby Jesus would grow to suffer greatly as a man and would pay the ultimate price when He gave his life on the cross for all who would believe in him. In addition, myrrh was used as an oriental remedy for intestinal worms in infants, a useful gift for a new baby.

### These gifts were not only expensive but portable.

"Laden with gold and spices, the journey of the magi evokes those journeys made to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba and the 'kings of the earth' (see 1 Kings 10:2,25; 2 Chronicles 9:24). Interestingly, the only other places where frankincense and myrrh are mentioned together are in songs about Solomon (see Song of Songs 3:6, 4:6,14)" (Dr. Scott Hahn). Perhaps Joseph and Mary kept myrrh in her medicine chest. The gifts might have been God's way of providing for the journey that lay ahead.



### A woman among the Magi?

Rev. Benedict Thomas Viviano, a renowned Gospel of Matthew professor, Dominican friar and priest ([https://www.stlbeacon.org/#!/content/17405/viviano\\_writes\\_about\\_a\\_woman\\_magi](https://www.stlbeacon.org/#!/content/17405/viviano_writes_about_a_woman_magi)), has a new Biblical theory that may change nativity scenes across the globe: there was one Wise Woman (or more) among the Wise Men. His original theory was published in 2011 in *Studies of Matthew* by Leuven University Press. It's "perfectly plausible" that Matthew would have understood the magi as some sort of Eastern sages, he said. "On the other hand, the masculine plural *magoi* does not close the question of gender. "The main reason to think of the presence of one or more women

among the magi is the background story of the queen of Sheba, with her quest for Israelite royal wisdom, her reverent awe, and her three gifts fit for a king," Viviano suggested. His second reason to suspect the presence of the feminine is the Israelite tradition of personifying wisdom as a woman, he said (Proverbs 8:22-30; 9:1-6; Book of Sirach, 24). Viviano's third argument for his female magi cause is that Matthew's Gospel later characterizes Jesus as embodying wisdom, which Jewish literature considers female and even terms Lady Wisdom. The passages he refers to are Matthew, Chapter 11:19 and 25-30. What difference it would have made if there was a woman among the magi? A women's magazine says: They would have come before the birth of Jesus, brought provisions for the child and his mother and the woman would have served as a midwife !

### A fourth Wise Man?



There's a story called "The Other Wise Man" by Henry van Dyke. It's about a fourth person who is supposed to accompany the other three wise men on their journey to search for the newborn King. The name of the person is Artaban. As Artaban prepares for the journey, he takes with him a bag of precious stones to give to the baby King. On this way to join the other three wise men, Artaban stops to help a poor person. The delay is just enough to make him miss his rendezvous with the others. Artaban never does catch up with them. He constantly runs into people who need help. And he always stops to help them. Eventually, Artaban gives away all his precious stones. As the story ends, Artaban is old and poor. He has never realized his dream to meet the King of Kings. But the story doesn't end here. One day Artaban is in Jerusalem. Authorities are about to execute a criminal. When Artaban sees the criminal, his heart skips a beat. Something tells him this is the King of Kings for whom he has been searching all his life. Artaban is heartbroken when he sees he can do nothing to help the King. Then something remarkable happens. Artaban hears the King's voice say to him: "Don't be broken-hearted, Artaban. You've been helping me all your life. When I was hungry, you gave me food. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was naked, you clothed me. When I was a stranger, you took me in"

### Lesser Epiphanies....?

Let's start by reminding ourselves: God keeps appearing; we still have epiphanies. One kind of lesser epiphany is an "aha" experience. We sometimes get an "aha" when studying the Bible. For days, Robert had been bothered by a big sin he'd done. That so awful, so nasty sin we dread telling in confession. Then, reading about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, Robert felt, "aha," if God can raise his friend Lazarus from the dead, God could forgive me this great sin I did. A "lesser epiphany!" When Robert went to confession, he knew God loved him, deeply and totally.

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## Reflect

### Lesser Epiphanies... ..? (cont'd.)

We have "lesser epiphanies" as others treat us with kindness. After Thomas Edison had finished making the very first light bulb, Edison gave the light bulb to a young assistant to carry upstairs. Crash! The young man dropped the light bulb! Twenty-four hours later, a second light bulb completed, Edison handed the second light bulb to the same young lad. Edison knew, accidents happen, but the young man was still

a fine young man. Here was a "lesser epiphany," God's love manifested in the kind gesture of a great inventor. Have no doubt. God continues to appear among us. When we attune ourselves to God, we see "lesser epiphanies" every day. There may be no star hovering overhead, but we recognize God in the kind gesture, in the "aha" insight; we see God in the love we receive and are called to give.

## From the Pastoral Staff

### #youareworthit

#### Nations shall walk by your light... Raise your eyes and look about

As we celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord I'm thinking there was a fourth gift which is overlooked – the Magi's presence – they actually had taken the time to show up! They resourcefully used their talents and skills to show us how we too can participate in life-giving and life-changing moments. What would it take for you to literally take steps to walk into an unknown future?

I think of four words beginning with the letter "C" – **Christ, Choice, Chance, and Change**. In other words, I have to intentionally make choices to faithfully follow Christ and trust that what might appear to have elements of chance, can lead to life changing moments. Whenever we use our eyes to seek and to attentively follow whatever for us is the metaphorical "star", we can be changed by unexpected encounters with Jesus - the Christ who presents chances or opportunities for us to change for the better.

I invite you to reflect upon two quotes. Pope Francis said the Magi leave us with concrete advice: *"The Magi began their journey looking at a star, and they found Jesus. They walked a lot. Today, we can take this piece of advice: look at the star and walk. Never stop walking, but, do not stop looking at the star. This is the strong advice for today: look at the star and walk ... May the Virgin Mary, the servant of the Lord, teach us to rediscover our vital need for humility and the vibrant desire to worship. May she teach us to look at the star and walk."*

Humility doesn't mean thinking less of our own self-worth. I am wondering how Mary endured the arduous and risky walk after she had chosen to respond to the angel Gabriel. I'm thinking that because she was full of grace, whenever she encountered hardships in life perhaps she'd resonate with these words from Viola Davis:

**"You're worth it.** Three words we have all heard at least a thousand times. You're worth it. But do you really understand what that means? It's a beautiful reminder to us all that we have worth. You have reason and rarity. There is value in each and every one of us – including you. That is precious even on the days you might not feel it. You never depreciate in value. Those words are there to remind you... Repeat after me. I'm worth it ... forget the naysayers and silence the critics. Even if the harshest words are the ones you say to yourself. Do not doubt yourself... Say it like you mean it. **I AM WORTH IT** – because **YOU ARE AND ALWAYS WILL BE!** And the next time you hesitate going after something you want. The next time you blush and brush off a compliment. The next time you doubt your place in the world, in the workplace, in your home, or in your own skin, say these words to yourself. **I AM WORTH IT.**"

You are worth it because when you were baptized you received the same grace as Mary. As we begin 2023, I pray that we walk into this New Year with our eyes open and to show up for all the manifestations of Jesus. It's Christ who desires that we embrace our self-worth and treat those we encounter with the same God given dignity. Always remember and believe that your self-worth comes from God who created you and desires to literally show-forth from within you to the world. As we walk throughout this year, we can do as the Magi and show up for each other without judgment and to celebrate each other. May our lived faith unite us so that we echo the prophet Isaiah **"you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow."**

Prayers & Blessings for a - #youareworthit – Happy and Healthy New Year!

Deacon John



## Pray

### The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Just a reminder that the RCIA is intended for:

- Unbaptized adults,
- Adults who have been baptized into a non-Catholic denomination ,
- Adults who have been baptized Catholic but never received first Eucharist or Confirmation



**NOW IS THE TIME TO FIND OUT MORE!**

Contact our RCIA Co-Coordinators:

Anne Marie Francis: [alfrancis.30@gmail.com](mailto:alfrancis.30@gmail.com) or Mary Frances Reavey: [mfreavey@gmail.com](mailto:mfreavey@gmail.com) to find out more information or to set up an appointment. Be on the look out for the dates for our Inquiry sessions that will be held on Sundays., after the 10:00AM Mass in the cafeteria.

### Want to know more about Prayer?

What is prayer? How can I pray personally? What is the proper way for me to pray? These are questions people keep asking. One of our parishioners, Ivette Mitchel, who has lots of experience in guiding others to pray, has offered to lead four sessions on these important aspects. If you are interested, please contact Ivette by phone at (908) 247-6039 or email at [ladyi63@aol.com](mailto:ladyi63@aol.com) She will finalize the details after hearing from you.



## Learn

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\*Source: Double the Donation



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## Connect

### In Appreciation of our new Nativity Set.

Thank you to Pearl Scott and the Martin De Porres Society for donating the new Nativity Set in front of the sanctuary.



## Give (and Receive!)

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023				Last Year's To-
Current Month	In-Pew/Mail	Parish Giv-	Weekly To-	Weekly Total
<b>Week 23 - Dec. 4, 2022</b>	\$17,492.00	\$14,248.25	<b>\$31,740.25</b>	\$30,212.75
<b>Week 24 - Dec. 11, 2022</b>	\$13,450.00	\$25,235.75	<b>\$38,685.75</b>	\$33,732.25
<b>Week 25 - Dec. 18, 2022</b>	\$10,261.00	\$12,698.25	<b>\$22,959.25</b>	\$31,730.75
<b>Week 26 - Dec. 25, 2022</b>	\$49,413.00	\$14,724.25	<b>\$64,137.25</b>	\$17,584.65
* Christmas and Sunday Collections are Combined for 2022			<b>Month-to-</b>	<b>Dec. Total Last</b>
<b>Immaculate Conception: \$1,945.00</b>			<b>\$157,522.50</b>	\$113,260.40
			<b>Current</b>	<b>Year-to-date as</b>
Retirement Fund for Religious: \$3,713.00			<b>\$703,928.17</b>	\$667,904.31

### Stewardship Reflection Jan 8, 2023 Epiphany of the Lord

***“Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:11***

The image of the Magi kneeling before the infant Jesus and opening their treasure chests for Him is an image that we should all try to follow each day. In gratitude for all that we have been given, we are called to generously share all of our gifts, not just the ones we pick and choose. God wants us to be generous with everything, but especially that one thing that means the most to you.

### Reflexiónese 8 de enero de 2023 - Epifanía del Señor

***“Entonces abrieron sus cofres y le ofrecieron sus regalos de oro, incienso y mirra” MATEO 2:11***

La imagen de los Magos arrodillados ante el niño Jesús, abriendo los cofres y los tesoros que tenían para Él, es una imagen que todos debemos tratar de seguir cada día. En agradecimiento por todo lo que hemos recibido, somos llamados a compartir con generosidad todos nuestros dones, no solo aquellos que escogemos. Dios quiere que seamos generosos con todos ellos, pero especialmente con aquel que tiene más significado para nosotros.

Alzheimer's Support Group Meeting, Jan. 11, 2023



The Alzheimer's Association and St. Matthias Catholic Church is co-hosting an Early Stage Support Group series for people living with Alzheimer's and Dementia and their care partners. The group will **meet every second Wednesday** of the month in the de Porres room in the Parish Office. Our first meeting is January 11<sup>th</sup> from 2pm-4pm. For more information visit [alz.org/NJ](http://alz.org/NJ).



**St Vincent de Paul Society at St Matthias**

We are looking for a volunteer to join us to manage our communications (website, social media, and print copy). If you think you have the skills and are interested in joining a ministry that makes a world of difference in the lives of our neighbors in need, please send an email to [SVDPatSM@gmail.com](mailto:SVDPatSM@gmail.com) for more information.

**St Vincent de Paul Society at St Matthias**

Do you have a vehicle that you are looking to donate? Look no further. The St Vincent de Paul Society has a program that will pick up your vehicle, at no cost to you, and handle the rest, from selling your vehicle to providing a tax receipt. Your vehicle donation helps fund local programs for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul – such as housing, utilities, food, disaster relief, job training, and more for neighbors in need. All types of vehicles, including cars, trucks, motorcycles, trailers, boats are accepted! You can use the following link to access their on-line form à <https://svdpusa.careasy.org/home>

Connect with Our Local Community



**SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS VIDEO CLUB**

There are many great spiritual masters of our time. Richard Rohr, OFM and others have works that have touched millions of God-seekers. Join this monthly video club and share your insights and prayerful responses to the works of Fr. Rohr and others.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month 10-11:30 a.m. at the House of Prayer and on Zoom. From January 13, February 10 (\$20--\$30 / session as you are able)**



**Women's Spirituality Weekend: Living in the Now**

**Friday, February 10, 2023 4:00 PM to Sunday, February 12, 2023 12:00 PM**

St. Francis Center for Renewal 395 Bridle Path Road Bethlehem, PA, 18017

If you have questions or would prefer to pay by check, please call the Center at 610-867-8890.



Parish Leadership

<p><b>Parish Pastoral Council:</b> <b>Co-Chairs:</b> Rose Peng, <a href="mailto:rosepeng@optonline.net">rosepeng@optonline.net</a> John Taylor, <a href="mailto:jptaylor1068@yahoo.com">jptaylor1068@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b>Co-Secretaries:</b> Frank Rees Marilyn Wegg  Stephan Busono Anne Marie Francis Bill Isele Maria Tapia-Burch</p>	<p>Msgr. Seamus Brennen, Ex-Officio Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio  <b>Trustees:</b> Pearl Scott Marge Richards</p>	<p><b>Parish Finance Council:</b> Kester Hector, Chair <b>Finance Council</b> <a href="http://stmatthias.net">@stmatthias.net</a> Carmen Driz-Melilli Barry Dusault Gwen Orlowski</p>	<p>Audrey Francis Joe Porter Joan Pritchard Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, Ex-Officio Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio</p>
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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](http://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 8<sup>th</sup> 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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Tuesday, 10/11	Tuesday, 11/08
Tuesday, 10/18	Tuesday, 11/15
Tuesday, 10/25	Tuesday, 11/29

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