



**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**  
 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*,  
**mjloboda**

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, MARCH 12, 2023-**  
**Third Sunday of Lent**



**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,**  
**at 11:00 AM.**

**EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL COMMITTEE:**

As announced last Sunday, the Diocese is asking every parish to form a Eucharistic Revival Committee.  
 Those who feel called to this ministry, please contact:  
 Fr. Abraham or Msgr. Brennan.



[www.stmatthias.net/emptybowls2023/](http://www.stmatthias.net/emptybowls2023/)

**CORNERSTONE EXPERIENCE!**

What is Cornerstone? It is a 26-hour experience which provides you with the opportunity to reflect renew and strengthen your faith while meeting other men in our Christian community. The weekend is hosted by parishioners who have experienced the gift of past Cornerstone weekends. Cornerstone provides:

- \* An outstanding opportunity to meet and interact with other men of the parish.
- \* is a welcoming, non-judgmental environment.
- \* allows for the opportunity to step out of the hustle of daily life to relax, pause and reflect.
- \* For those who simply need some time to stop and think.

It is for ordinary men like you! Why not try it once? There is one this month near us: at **St. Augustine's Church in Kendall Park**, the weekend of **March 24th and 25th** (Friday night – Saturday night, concluding with Mass). Contact Pat Dillon at 732-859-7953 or [Pat.Dillon@comcast.net](mailto:Pat.Dillon@comcast.net) or go to <https://parish.staugustinenj.org/cornerstone>

# 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 - March



**Sunday, Mar 12, 2023 3rd Sunday of Lent**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	First Communion #3 at Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass—Sign Language Interpreter	Church
12:00PM	Mass	Church

**Monday, Mar 13, 2023 St. Euphrasia of Constantinople**

8:00AM	Mass/Miraculous Medal Novena	Church
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**Tuesday, Mar 14, 2023 St. Matilda, German Queen**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
6:00PM	HSA General Mtg./Uniform Swap	Cafeteria
7:00PM	Racial Justice Initiative Core Mtg.	Zoom
7:15PM	Hand Bell Rehearsal	Church

**Wednesday, Mar 15, 2023 St. Louise de Marillac Co-Founder of Daughters of Charity**

8:00AM	Mass—St. Joseph Novena	Church
9:30AM	Prayer Group 1 Holy Spirit	de Porres Rm
2:30PM	SMS Play Practice	School
6:45PM	Confirmation #8	John XXIII Rm
7:30PM	Folk Group Rehearsal	Church

**Thursday, Mar 16, 2023 St. Heribert of Cologne, Archbishop**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
3:30PM	Children's Choir Gr. 3&4	Church
4:00PM	Children's Choir Gr. 5-8	Church
7:00PM	Prayer Shawl Ministry	Neumann Rm
7:30PM	Adult Choir rehearsal	Church

**Friday, Mar 17, 2023 St. Patrick, Bishop & Apostle of Ireland**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
2:30PM	SMS—Play Practice	John XXIII Rm
7:00PM	Stations of the Cross	Church

**Saturday, Mar 18, 2023 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor of the Church**

9:30AM	Secular Franciscans Mtg.	de Porres Rm
11:00AM	Anointing Mass	Church
3:30PM	Reconciliation	Church
5:00PM	Vigil Mass	Church

**Sunday, Mar 19, 2023 4th Sunday of Lent**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	First Communion #4at Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
12:00PM	Mass	Church

Dear Friends,

This coming Friday is the feast of St. Patrick, “when everyone is Irish,” celebrating the saint who plucked a shamrock from the ground, and used it, with its three leaves in one plant, to explain the Mystery of the Trinity - three Persons in one God.



Interestingly, this year, this feast falls on a Friday in Lent! So what about the corn beef dinner without which St. Patrick’s Day is incomplete? Don’t worry, our Bishop has already announced the dispensation so you may enjoy corned beef (or other meat) that day and abstain from meat on another day that same week. That brings us to an important discussion about the meaning of Tradition. When Catholic Church gives so much importance to Tradition, can we easily change the hallowed tradition of abstaining from meat on a Friday of Lent, or any other tradition?

It depends on your understanding of tradition. All traditions are not of equal value. We need to distinguish between Primary Traditions (with a capital T) and Secondary traditions (with a small case t). Primary Traditions are those fundamental beliefs and practices that constitute who we are as Catholics. Some examples are belief in the Holy Trinity, Pope as the Vicar of Christ, Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, Immaculate Conception, etc. These are non-negotiable. While examples of Secondary traditions are days of fasting and abstinence, Holy Days of Obligation, devotions like rosary, novena, etc. These can be changed or suspended as per the decision of the conference of Bishops. So the dispensation given for the feast of St. Patrick’s day when it falls on a Friday in Lent is precisely because it is a secondary tradition.

It is also good to point out that the feast of St. Joseph on March 19<sup>th</sup> (which is a higher ranking feast in the Liturgical calendar in comparison to St. Patrick’s) is moved to March 20<sup>th</sup> this year. Why? When it falls on a Sunday, the priority is given to the feast of our Lord (which every Sunday is) and so the feast of St. Joseph is celebrated a day later.

This is a big Feast for Italians because in the Middle Ages, God, through St. Joseph’s intercession, saved the Sicilians from a very serious drought. So in his honor, the custom has been for all to wear red, in the same way that green is worn on St. Patrick’s Day. In many parishes with large Italian population, a big altar (“la tavola di San Giusè” or “St. Joseph’s Table”) is laden with food that people bring to be blessed by the priest on the feast day and to have a big feast day meal. I myself have blessed baskets of food that Italian families bring in every parish I have served.

These celebrations do not take away the penitential spirit of Lent. The sacrifices we make, the extra devotions we practice are all meant to bring us to a joyful connection to the Lord. In the Lenten Preface of the Mass we hear: “Each year You give us this joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.” In fact, next Sunday is called ‘Laetare Sunday’ because we focus on Christian joy in the Mass. Let us continue and complete this joyful season of Lent!

Your brother in Christ,  
Fr. Abraham Orapankal

## Readings for the Week

**Monday:** 2 Kgs 5:1-15ab; Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Lk 4:24-30

**Tuesday:** Dn 3:25, 34-43; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc, 8-9; Mt 18:21-35

**Wednesday:** Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Mt 5:17-19

**Thursday:** Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Lk 11:14-23

**Friday:** Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6c-8a, 8bc-9, 10-11ab, 14, 17; Mk 12:28-34

**Saturday:** Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4, 18-19, 20-21ab; Lk 18:9-14

**Sunday:** 1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ps 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41 or Jn 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38em PA 18017

## Mass Intentions for the Week

**Saturday, Mar 11** 5:00PM Joseph Moran, by Joe, Ginny & Eileen

**Sunday, Mar 12** 8:00AM Rosean Svani, by Mom & Family

10:00AM Intention of Parishioners

12:00PM Siu C.K. Pang, by Leasing Pang

**Monday, Mar 13** 8:00AM Fran Varga, by the Tibay Family

**Tuesday, Mar 14** 8:00AM Brazil Vidal, by Menchie Ventura & Family

**Wednesday, Mar 15** 8:00AM John Gleason, by Barbara Gleason

**Thursday, Mar 16** 8:00AM Alice & Joseph Hadjar,  
by daughter, Loraine Soltis

**Friday, Mar 17** 8:00AM Birthday Blessings for Alma Valdez,  
by Anne Marie Francis

**Saturday, Mar 18** 5:00PM Joan & Raymond Felton, by Claire

**Sunday, Mar 19** 8:00AM Anthony & Anne Washkevich,  
by James & Mary Woods

10:00AM Leonarda Borysewicz

12:00PM Intention of Parishioners

## 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](mailto: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  
Arthur & Regina Berlowitz  
John Blum  
Anthony Brandi  
Barbara Butler  
Bianca Canlas  
Tara Capatosto  
Ellen Catalina  
Kyle Davidson  
Lisa DeFeo  
Ann Devlin  
Michael DiMaggio  
William Dolphin  
Vivian Dong  
*Josephine Geenty*  
Claudia Gemgnani  
Helen Geraghty

Emma Gergely  
Carol Gryskiewicz  
Sloopy & John Hoffman  
Marilyn Horvath  
Baby Isla-Rose Huffman  
Robert Kashinsky  
Al Kepenis  
Kathleen Langenbacher  
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. Bernadine 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*

Mary Gidaro - Mother of Joe Gidaro, Brigid Brennan - Sister of Msgr. Brennan, Helen Vanni - Mother of Joey Anderson  
Harry Hadinata - Grandfather of Jennifer Kasics,

## Reflect



### Smile with Your Family



"Is your mother home?" the salesman asked the small boy. "Yeah, she's home," the boy said, scooting over to let him past. The salesman rang the doorbell, got no response, knocked once, then again. Still no one came to the door. Turning to the boy, the fellow said, "I thought you said your mother was home!?" The kid replied, "She is; but this isn't where I live." 😊

The story of Adam and Eve was being carefully explained in the children's Sunday School class. Following the story, the children were asked to draw some picture that would illustrate the story. Little Bobby was most interested and drew a picture of a car with three people in it. In the front seat, behind the wheel was a man and in the back seat, a man and a woman. The teacher was at a loss to understand how this illustrated the lesson of Adam and Eve. But little Bobby was prompt with his explanation. "Oh.. this is God driving Adam and Eve out of the garden!" 😊

While shopping for a bathroom scale, I found one that tracks not only weight but also body fat, bone mass, and water percentage. I nixed that one in favor of a low-tech model. As I told the salesperson, "I don't need to be depressed four ways; one is quite enough." 😊

As I showed a photo of my parents to my grandson, I told him: "This is your great-grandma and great grandpa "Do you think I look like them?" He shook his head and said. "Not yet." 😊

While working the beverage cart at the local golf course, a customer asked me if I could go back to the previous green to see if she had left her sandwich there. I had spent some time looking for a sandwich on the grass, when a golfer asked me if someone had lost a sand wedge. 😊



### Parenting Tune-Up

**"The people grumbled against Moses" (Ex 17: 3)** Its normal in any family to grumble occasionally. Parents grumble about their kids and vice versa. But what happens after the grumbling? "I'm sorry. I'll try to do better." Is such apologizing a normal thing in your family?



### Marriage Tune-Up

If you don't do regular maintenance on your car, it may start spluttering and clanking. If your spouse is making noises (complaining, nagging etc.), maybe it's time to look under the hood. You may find that neglect is the culprit. Perhaps you haven't listened closely to what your beloved needs. Maybe work or the kids have become a priority. Ask.

## Why Jews Hate Samaritans!

Today's Gospel hints at the enmity between Jews and Samaritans: **"The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"** This mutual hostility had begun centuries earlier when the Assyrians carried the northern tribes of Israel into captivity. The Jewish slaves betrayed their heritage by intermarrying with the Assyrians, thus diluting their bloodline and creating a "mongrel race" called the Samaritans. The Assyrian men who were relocated to Israel married Jewish women, thus producing a mixed race in Israel as well. Hence, southern Jews considered all Samaritan bloodlines and their heritage impure. By the time the Samaritan Jews returned to their homeland, their views of God had been greatly

contaminated. By contrast, when the southern Hebrew tribes were carried off into captivity, they stubbornly resisted the Babylonian culture they returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, proud that they had compromised neither their religious convictions nor their culture. So when the Samaritans offered to help to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple, the southern Jews who had re-turned from exile vehemently rejected Samaritan assistance. Consequently, the rejected and ostracized Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. But in 129 B.C. a Jewish general destroyed it, a slap to Samaritan dignity that stung for centuries, deepening the mutual scorn and hostility between Samaritans and Jews.



## Reflect

### Water Is Life!



Gandhi, India's great Champion, proved to the whole world that a person can go without food for a long, long time - for weeks - but water is something else. I don't know how long someone can live without water, but it isn't very long. A baby who can't keep down fluids will dehydrate and die in just a few days. Adults last only slightly longer. The only life-sustaining substance that we need more frequently than water is air. Water, then, is essential to life. In one sense, water is life. Where there is no water, there is no life. Cactuses and camels and gnarled trees and grasses of the desert can adapt to conditions of low water, but there isn't any living thing on this earth that can adapt to no water. "Water is life." Lack of water is death. To be thirsty is to stare death in the eye. It's no wonder that Jesus turned water and thirst into spiritual teachings as he sat there by Jacob's well, that ancient and sacred place for quenching thirst. If thirst of the body is the very taste of death, then thirst of the soul is the very picture of spiritual despair.

### A Precious Moment of Lucidity

*Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.*

*John 4: 5-42*

Their 81-year-old mother suffers from dementia. Every day her five daughters see her slipping away more and more. In the beginning, Mom was brilliant at faking it, compensating her memory loss with skill and grace. But her daughters knew the time would come when she would no longer recognize them. That day came a few days after Thanksgiving.

The youngest sister took their mother to dinner with her in-laws. They were seated next to each other when Mom turned to her daughter and said, "So, remind me, how did we meet?" Taken aback, the daughter replied, "Mom, you gave birth to me." Mom then said hesitantly, "Well, then, why didn't I raise you?" "You did, Mom." Trying to hide her distress, the daughter excused herself from the table, not wanting her mother to see how upset she was.

Mom followed her into the kitchen. When they were alone, Mom took her hands. "Don't cry, please. Are you crying because you think I don't love you?" "No," her daughter said, "I know you love me." "Are you crying for me?" The daughter said nothing. Mom took her hand and held it tightly.

"This is me getting old. It is neither easy nor pleasant. But if I can get through this, so can you. Please know that I love you. And brace yourself, because this is who I am now. "It's not that I don't love you. I love you

absolutely. It's just that you have slipped from my mind. These things happen. And this thing, this thing will happen again and again, but I love you. I love you so much.

"Honey, I don't know your name right now, but you must trust that I will always know exactly who you are. So do this for me: Tell me everything. I want to know every last detail - where you were born, where you went to high school and college, what you do for a living, if you are married. Do you have children? Come back to the table and sit down next to me and tell me all of it."

**A mother's love finds its bearings through the haze of dementia and gives her family a way forward. Her love for her daughters enables her to dig deep and find her "brightness." When we are driven by such love, we're able to confront who we are, accept our challenges and failings, and find a way to move forward. In her encounter with Jesus, the woman at the well is able to see herself and her life as it is and realize, despite her circumstances, the compassion of God in her midst. The grace to start over again is ours if we are honest enough to confront our lapses of memory and judgment and focus on God's constant presence and invitation to re-center our lives in his love and grace.**



### No women allowed!!!!

There is a Greek monastery at Mount Athos in which nothing female is allowed. It is home to 20

Eastern Orthodox monasteries, and 2,000 monks from Greece and other eastern orthodox countries such as Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia. These monks live an ascetic life, isolated from the rest of the world. The Mount - actually a 335 sq km (130 sq mile) peninsula - may be the largest area in the world from which women, and female animals, are banned. Men can enter but not women, roosters but not hens, horses but not mares, bulls but not cows. Armed guards patrol the border to ensure that nothing feminine passes the gates. It has been this way for more than 700 years. [Arnold Prater, *The Presence*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993).] Separate and definitely not equal: that has been the attitude toward women of many Churches through the ages.

***So it's really remarkable that this particular Samaritan evangelist happens to be a woman. She would be as surprised about it as anybody. When she first met Jesus, she was surprised that even he talked to her. Once converted, she became an evangelist, enthusiastically introducing Jesus to her fellow villagers. We need to allow Jesus free entry into our personal lives. A sign that God is active in our lives is His entering in to our personal, "private" lives. Jesus wants to get personal with us, especially during this Lenten season. Jesus wants to get into our "private" lives. We have a "private" personal life which is contrary to the will of God. Christ wishes***

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## Reflect

### No women allowed!?!? (cont'd)

**to come into that “private” life, not to embarrass us, not to judge or condemn us, not to be unkind or malicious to us. Rather, Christ comes into our “private” personal life to free us, to change us and to offer us what we really need: living water. The living water is God the Holy Spirit Who enters the soul of the woman through Jesus and his love. We human beings are composed of four parts: mind, body, emotions and spirit. When we let God the Holy Spirit come into us and take control of our thinking, our physical activity, our emotions and our spirit, He can bring harmony to the way we live with all four parts of our humanity. We can find this living water in the Sacraments, in prayer and in the Holy Bible.**

### “No drinkin’ and no dancin’ area”!

A couple of Catholic young men from the North were visiting a dusty little town in the back country of West Texas. It was a hard-shell Baptist town in the Bible belt of the South: “No drinkin’ and no dancin’ area”! But these two men were strangers; so they asked a cowboy where they might get a drink. “In this town,” said the cowboy, “we use whiskey only for snakebite: to wash the wound as first aid.” Then he added slyly, “If you guys are so thirsty for whiskey, there’s only one poisonous snake in this town and that is in the zoo. So you better get a ticket to the zoo, go to the snake park, get hold of a cobra through the iron bar of its cage and give it a big hug! The zoo keeper will appear immediately with whisky.”

**The woman at the well had a mighty thirst, a thirst like that of these young guys for whiskey, a thirst so big that it led her through five husbands and who knows what else. And still she was thirsty — a thirst caused by the absence of God in her life. A meeting with Jesus gave her the living waters of friendship with Jesus and the anointing of the Spirit of God which restored her dignity and changed her life. She was willing to leave her husbands. We need to leave the “husbands” behind during Lent as the Samaritan woman did. Today’s Gospel message challenges us to get rid of our unholy attachments and the evil habits that keep us enslaved and idolatrous. Lent is the time to learn from our mistakes of over-indulgence in food, drink, drugs, gambling, promiscuity, or any other addiction that may keep us from coming to the living waters of a right relationship with God. We all have our short list, don’t we? And we all know, honest to God, what it is we need to leave behind before we come to the Living Water and the Bread of Heaven. Let us make an earnest attempt to do so during this Lenten season.**

### “God will not let you stumble or fall!”



One of the commencement traditions at Harvard University is Senior Class Chapel. On the morning of graduation, seniors gather in Memorial Church to hear the minister offer words of solace and encouragement as they leave “the Yard” to take their places in the world. The 1998 senior class heard the unvarnished truth from the Rev. Peter Gomes, minister at Harvard and the author of several books on the Bible, including *The Good Book* and *Sermons*. In his gentle ringing tones, that call to mind a cross between a Shakespearean actor and the TV sitcom character Frasier, the inimitable Doctor Gomes took no prisoners as he began: “You are going to be sent out of here for good, and most of you aren’t ready to go. The president is about to bid you into the fellowship of educated men and women and,” - and here he paused and spoke each word slowly for emphasis - “you know just - how - dumb - you - really - are.” The senior class cheered in agreement. “And worse than that,” Doctor Gomes continued, “the world - and your parents in particular - are going to expect that you will be among the brightest and best. But you know that you can no longer fool all the people even some of the time. By noontime today, you will be out of here. By tomorrow you will be history. By Saturday, you will be toast. That’s a fact - no exceptions, no extensions.” “Nevertheless, there is reason to hope,” Doctor Gomes promised. “The future is God’s gift to you. God has not brought you this far to this place to abandon you or leave you here alone and afraid. The God of Israel never stumbles, never sleeps, and never goes on sabbatical. Thus, my beloved and bewildered young friends, do not be afraid.”

***What Doctor Gomes did for the senior class at Harvard, Jesus does for the woman at the well described in today’s Gospel. We need to turn to Jesus who loves us with non-evaluative, non-judgmental unconditional love: We all face moments when guilt plagues us and we are upset for falling for the same temptations again and again; when we make choices that turn out to be all wrong; when our relationships with others fall in a heap; when we feel lonely, sick and tired of the way people are treating us; when we are depressed and upset and can’t see anything good in ourselves; when our faith is at rock bottom and we feel as if the Church and religion aren’t doing anything for us; when we beat ourselves up for lack of enthusiasm to be true disciples of Jesus ready to do anything for him, and for days that go by without a word of prayer; when all we feel is failure and defeat. During such moments it is great to read a story about Jesus and his love and acceptance of the woman at the well. Let us rest assured that Jesus is there to accept us warmly and help us to see that he will give us the strength and the power we need to overcome whatever it is that is grieving us.***

## From Our Pastoral Staff

On this Third Sunday of Lent and the next two Sundays, we break from reading the Gospel of Matthew to read from John's Gospel. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel not assigned to a particular liturgical year. Instead, readings from John's Gospel are interspersed throughout our three-year liturgical cycle. It is also a favorite of mine in the Gospels.

In today's Gospel, the dialogue between Jesus and a woman from Samaria is among the most lengthy and most theological found in Scripture. The most startling aspect of the conversation is that it happens at all. Jesus, an observant Jew of that time, was expected to avoid conversation with women in public. The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans should have prevented the conversation as well. The woman herself alludes to the break from tradition: "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Yet Jesus not only converses with the woman, he also asks to share her drinking vessel, an action that makes him unclean according to Jewish law.

The initial conversation between Jesus and the woman is better understood if we consider the importance of water, especially in the climate of Israel. At first, the woman understands Jesus' promise of "living water" in a literal sense: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." With no running water, the daily trip to the well by the women of the community was of paramount importance. The women of the town would have traveled to the well in the early morning, but this woman came to the well at noon, the hottest time of the day. The timing of her visit is a clear sign that she is an outcast within the Samaritan community. We learn in her conversation with Jesus that she is an outcast because of her "many husbands."

Behind the conversation lies the animosity and rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans. Samaritans shared Jewish ancestry, but Samaritans had intermarried with

foreigners when they lived under the rule of the Assyrians. Samaritan religion included worship of Yahweh, but was also influenced by the worship of other gods. When the Jews refused Samaritan help in the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans eventually built a temple for themselves at Mt. Gerizim (the same mountain mentioned by the woman at the well). Like the Jews, the Samaritans believed that a Messiah would come.

The high point of the conversation is when Jesus reveals himself to her as the Messiah. His answer to the Samaritan woman's questions about worship is meant to predict a time when worshipping in truth and spirit will become the way to worship.

After the conversation, the Samaritan woman becomes a disciple. Even though she is an outcast and not a Jew, she returns to her town to lead others to Jesus and to wonder whether she has found the Messiah. The Samaritan townspeople return with her to meet Jesus for themselves, and many are said to come to believe in him.

The significance of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has many levels. The first is personal: The woman is herself converted to belief in Jesus as Messiah because he knows her sin but speaks with her just the same. The second is social: Having come to know Jesus as the Messiah, the Samaritan woman becomes an evangelist to her own people.

The third level of the story is educational: Jesus uses his encounter with the Samaritan woman to teach his disciples that God's mercy is without limit. The disciples return from their shopping quite confused to find Jesus talking with a Samaritan, and a woman at that! But the conversion of the Samaritan townspeople is a foretaste of the kind of open community that will be created among those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

Dee Nann



## Pray



### Have You Spoken to your Mother Lately?

Rosary is said after the 8:00AM Mass daily, and after the 10:00AM on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Don't know how to pray the Rosary? Pamphlets are available in the pamphlet racks at the rear of the church.

Don't have a Rosary? There is a box marked "Rosary" in the Cry Room on the piano. Take one. Have some extra rosaries at home? Leave one in the box. Come join us and get to know our Blessed Mother.

### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Join us on Fridays during Lent in Church at 7:00 PM. The Stations are a devotion intended to help us follow Jesus on his way to Calvary.

Each Friday we have a different theme with beautiful reflections, led by our different ministries. Welcome to pray this ancient devotion of the church.



# Message of the Holy Father

(continued from week)

Lenten penance is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross. This is precisely what Peter and the other disciples needed to do. To deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach ourselves from mediocrity and vanity. We need to set out on the journey, an uphill path that, like a mountain trek, requires effort, sacrifice and concentration. These requisites are also important for the synodal journey to which, as a Church, we are committed to making. We can benefit greatly from reflecting on the relationship between Lenten penance and the synodal experience.



In his “retreat” on Mount Tabor, Jesus takes with him three disciples, chosen to be witnesses of a unique event. He wants that experience of grace to be shared, not solitary, just as our whole life of faith is an experience that is shared. For it is in togetherness that we follow Jesus. Together too, as a pilgrim Church in time, we experience the liturgical year and Lent within it, walking alongside those whom the Lord has placed among us as fellow travellers. Like the ascent of Jesus and the disciples to Mount Tabor, we can say that our Lenten journey is “synodal”, since we make it together along the same path, as disciples of the one Master. For we know that Jesus is himself the Way, and therefore, both in the liturgical journey and in the journey of the Synod, the Church does nothing other than enter ever more deeply and fully into the mystery of Christ the Saviour.

(continued next week)

## 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.

For more information, please contact:  
**Claudette Gaspard** (Environment) 732-406-4118  
email: [gaspard17@aol.com](mailto:gaspard17@aol.com) or **Nancy Inzano** (Altar Linens).  
732-261-2530. E Mail: [nancy.inzano@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.inzano@gmail.com)

### Martha Ministry: Room for More!

Please specify preference in care of altar linens, or dusting/straightening altar, sacristy, crying room, reconciliation room, etc. or helping with environment (decor).

When making contact, please give your name, cell number and e mail address.

## Learn

The HSA is proud to sponsor our first  
**BLOOD DRIVE**  
Give the gift of life.

@SMS Cafeteria

Date and Time TBD  
(based on interest)

Each donor will receive  
1 HSA hour!

The poster features a graphic of two hands holding a red heart with a blood tube connected to it.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT 1 BLOOD DONATION SAVES THREE LIVES?!

The HSA is organizing its first Blood Drive! We have been asked to gather interest before booking a date and time, so please let us know if you would be interested in donating.

*SMS families receive 1 hour toward their 4-hour commitment.*

To register visit: [www.stmatthias.net/blooddrive2023](http://www.stmatthias.net/blooddrive2023)



This year, the feast of St. Patrick falls on a Friday. Bishop Checchio has already given dispensation, so you may enjoy corned beef (or other meat) that day and abstain from meat on another day that same week.

## Parish Updates

If you are now solely using a cell phone, have changed your phone number or address, please call the parish office, so we can update your records. We would also like to update our parish data base with e-mail addresses.

Email Kelly at: [kcounts@stmatthias.net](mailto:kcounts@stmatthias.net) to have your email address included or to update an email address. Thank you!

If you are moving, please notify the Parish Office so we can keep our parishioner records current.

Thank you!



## Give (and Receive!)

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023				Last Year's To-
Current Month	In-Pew/Mail	Parish Giving	Weekly Total	Weekly Total
Week 36 - Mar 5, 2023	\$12,602.00	\$20,070.75	<b>\$32,672.75</b>	\$36,094.75
Week 37 - Mar. 12, 2023	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$0.00</b>	\$30,521.25
Week 38 - Mar. 19, 2023	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$0.00</b>	\$24,352.25
Week 39 - Mar. 26, 2023	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$0.00</b>	\$20,592.25
			Month-to-	Mar Total Last
<b>Ash Wednesday (In-Pew/Mail as of 2/22): \$3,749</b>			<b>\$32,672.75</b>	\$111,560.50
			Current Year	Year-to-date as
			<b>\$973,215.27</b>	\$1,008,537.07



### Bishop's Annual Appeal Renewed and Sent on Mission by the Eucharist

If you have yet to make your pledge to this year's Bishop's Annual Appeal, you will have the opportunity to do so next weekend, March 18/19, which has been designated as **Bishop's Annual Appeal In-Pew Weekend**. Please prayerfully consider a gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal to help our parish reach its goal. If we can exceed our goal, 50% of the amount collected over goal will be returned to us in the form of a parish rebate. Just as important as our financial goal is our goal of reaching **100% participation**. Every gift, no matter the size, is important

#### Stewardship Reflection Mar 12, 2023 3rd Sunday of Lent

**"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again."  
John 4:13**

Jesus reminds us that material things, even something as basic as water, can never satisfy us over the long run. When we build our lives around material possessions we will always want more and no amount will ever satisfy our desire. True joy and peace only comes when we follow Jesus - when we become more "God-centered" and less "self-centered."

#### Reflexiónese 12 de marzo de 2023 3<sup>er</sup> domingo de Cuaresma

**"Todo el que beba de esta agua volverá a tener sed" JUAN 4:13**

Jesús nos recuerda que las cosas materiales, aun algo tan básico como el agua, nunca pueden satisfacernos a largo plazo. Cuando construimos nuestras vidas alrededor de las posesiones materiales siempre queremos más y ninguna cantidad logrará satisfacer nuestros deseos. El verdadero gozo y la verdadera paz vienen cuando seguimos a Jesús, entonces nos volvemos más "centrados en Dios" y menos "egocéntricos".

## Serve



### Morning of Service, Saturday, March 18th

The next Morning of Service will be held on Saturday, March 18th. If you are interested in volunteering that morning, please email John and Coleen Zdziarski at [jjzdzarski@comcast.net](mailto:jjzdzarski@comcast.net). Please note that those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. The sites are:

1. **Franklin Food Bank** - 224 Churchill Avenue in Somerset - sorting canned goods, etc. (limited to six people - minimum age is 14)
2. **Pregnancy Aid Center** - 59 Thompson Street in Raritan - sorting children's clothing (limited to eight people)
3. **Spring Hills Somerset Assisted Senior Living Facility** (9:30 - 10:30) - 473 DeMott Lane in Somerset - Singing to the residents under the direction of Joan Best Seamon

### 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](mailto:msherwood@stmatthias.net)

## Serve



### CAREGIVER/CARE SUPPORT MINISTRY MEETING

We'd like to invite parishioners who are caring for ill loved ones, or are coping with chronic illness themselves, and in need of spiritual and emotional support, to join us for discussion and prayer in the Parish Office - dePorres Room.

**DATE:** SATURDAY, March 25th, **TIME:** 10:00 - 1:30AM

**WHERE:** de Porres Room in the Parish Office



### 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: [mshewood@stmatthias.net](mailto:mshewood@stmatthias.net)



## WHO WON THE SUPER CASH 50/50?

The recent Night of Winners was a big success and the winner of the Super Cash 50/50 was William Civick, who is our parishioner. The total amount won was **\$10,827.50**. Congratulations to Mr. Civick!

## Connect with Our Local Community



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



[www.stmatthias.net/emptybowls2023/](http://www.stmatthias.net/emptybowls2023/)



United Way of Northern New Jersey

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[UnitedWayTaxPrep@UnitedWayNNJ.org](mailto:UnitedWayTaxPrep@UnitedWayNNJ.org).

Or call 973-993-1160 x 5.

### Simply Prayer: St. Joseph ... Man of Silence, Man of Action

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

10:00 AM 11:30 AM St. Francis Center for Renewal 395 Bridle Path Road, Bethlehem, PA, [sfcr-info@stfrancisctr.org](mailto:sfcr-info@stfrancisctr.org)



## Parish Leadership

### Parish Pastoral Council:

#### Co-Chairs:

Rose Peng, [rosepeng@optonline.net](mailto:rosepeng@optonline.net)

John Taylor, [jptaylor1068@yahoo.com](mailto:jptaylor1068@yahoo.com)

### Co-Secretaries:

Frank Rees  
Marilyn Wegg

Stephan Busono  
Anne Marie Francis  
Bill Isele  
Maria Tapia-Burch

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

### Trustees:

Pearl Scott  
Marge Richards

### Parish Finance Council:

Kester Hector, Chair  
[FinanceCouncil@stmatthias.net](mailto:FinanceCouncil@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](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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