



**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-Grospain, Business Administrator  
**mpburke-grospain**

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**

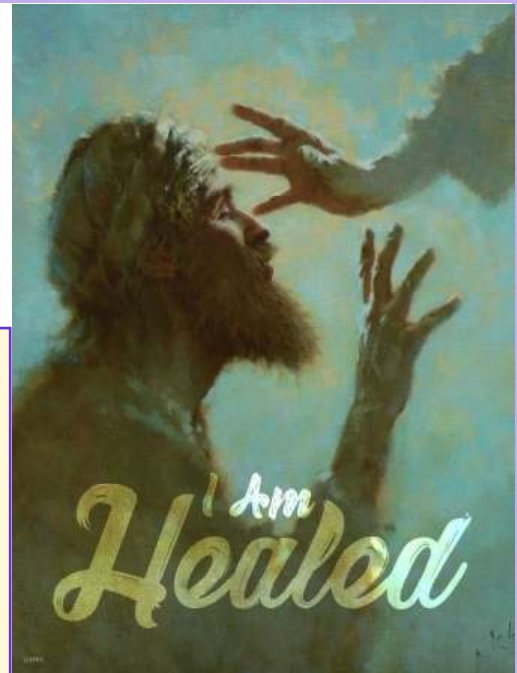
**THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS**  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023-**  
**Fourth Sunday of Lent**



**TODAY** at 4PM in the Cafeteria, 6th-12th graders are invited to learn about "Coping" skills.

**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.



**Join Us**  
**Next Sunday,**  
**March 26, 2023**  
**For more**  
**information**  
**see page 10**  
**And visit :**



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



**Fundraiser for The Center for Great Expectations**



**A joint project of SMS National Junior Honor Society & St. Martin de Porres Society**

**This weekend**, please support a joint project of the St. Matthias National Junior Honor Society and the St. Martin de Porres Society - a candy fundraiser to benefit the Center for Great Expectations here in Somerset. Your candy purchase (\$2 each for chocolate and non-chocolate) will help fulfill some of the mothers' needs at the center. Candy sales will take place in the church vestibule after all Masses.

# 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.

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

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	First Communion #4 at Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
12:00PM	Mass	Church
4:00PM	NeXt Level Grp.	Cafeteria

**Monday, Mar 20, 2023 Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

8:00AM	Feast of St. Joseph Church Mass / Miraculous Medal Novena	Church
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**Tuesday, Mar 21, 2023 St. Nicholas of Flue, Patron of Switzerland**

8:00AM	Mass—St. Joseph Novena	Church
7:15PM	Hand Bell Rehearsal	Church
7:30PM	Pastoral Council Mtg. de Porres Rm & Zoom	

**Wednesday, Mar 22, 2023 St. Maria Josefa, Nun & Foundress**

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 #7	John XXIII Rm
7:30PM	Folk Group Rehearsal	Church

**Thursday, Mar 23, 2023 St. Turibus of Mogrovejo, Archbishop of Lima, Peru**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
3:30PM	Children's Choir Gr. 3&4	Church
4:00PM	Children's Choir Gr. 5-8	Church
7:30PM	Easter Vigil/Easter Sunday rehearsal	Adult Choir Church

**Friday, Mar 24, 2023 St. Catherine of Sweden, Foundress**

8:00AM	Mass & Reconciliation	Church
2:30PM	SMS—Play Practice	John XXIII Rm
6:00PM	SMS—PICO Night	Cafeteria
7:00PM	Stations of the Cross	Church

**Saturday, Mar 25, 2023 Solemnity - The Annunciation of the Lord**

10:00AM	Caregivers Mtg.	de Porres Rm
3:00PM	Reconciliation	Church
5:00PM	Vigil Mass	Church

**Sunday, Mar 26, 2023 5th Sunday of Lent**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
9:30AM	1st Eucharist Retreat: Parent & Child	Cafeteria
10:00AM	First Communion #4at Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
12:00PM	Mass , Scout Sunday Mass	Church
4:00PM	SMYLE Mtg.	Cafeteria

Dear Friends,

Welcome back to Msgr. Brennan who had gone to Ireland when he got the sad news of his sister's passing away. He is grateful to our community for remembering Brigid during our Prayers of Intercession at all our weekend Masses and for the loving support we offered him.



We know that the feast of St. Joseph is on March 19 [today]; but this year it is postponed to March 20 [tomorrow], because it is falling on a Sunday, the Lord's Day. As I discussed last week in this column, some traditions are changeable with the changing situations. Thus the doctrine on St. Joseph and the honor we give him with a Solemn Feast can be seen as Primary Traditions that will not be changed; but the date to celebrate this Solemn Feast can be considered as Secondary tradition and so can be changed if a need arises as it happened this year.

This reminds me to share with you another question that we priests are asked often: What to do with old and unusable sacred items? Many people have holy objects like broken rosaries, holy cards, statues, pictures of Jesus and saints, etc., remaining in a clutter box in many houses, in a state of permanent limbo as people don't know how to dispose of these items. Some do have an attachment to these sacred objects, even if they are broken or unused. But many, in my understanding, hold on to broken or unused holy items due to unspoken guilt. A fear that something can happen if they simply discard these sacred items. People fear that something can go wrong if they fail to handle these religious items properly.

The Church does provide guidance on this. The rule of thumb for the disposition of these items is that anything that has been blessed should be burned or simply buried. Now, if you're reading this and feel anxious about the palms, rosaries, and prayer cards you've thrown away over the years, there's no need to lose sleep over it.

One important thing we need to understand is this: all sacred objects are means to an end. They are tools for our spiritual growth. If the water flow in our faucet is faulty, we call the plumber who will replace the parts or the pipe. The old parts and pipes will be discarded. God uses created things as channels of grace. That means grace is coming to us through these channels from Jesus Christ who is the source of our life-giving water, as he told the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." (John 4:11). Therefore, if these channels or tools are no more usable, they need to be discarded.

I liked this explanation from the Diocese of Superior in Wisconsin: "It is not a sin to throw away blessed items, but out of proper respect, one should dispose of them in this way. If devotionals have not been blessed, such as some of the holy cards and such that come through the mail, those are simply pictures and can be thrown away. If you feel uncomfortable throwing them away, you can burn or bury them as well."

Jesus said: "Know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32). May we all seek the truth and experience true freedom in Jesus Christ. His truth will bring us true joy. And, today is "Laetare Sunday" when the Church is inviting us to be joyful in anticipation of the approaching celebration of Easter.

Your brother in Christ,  
Fr. Abraham Orapankal

## Readings for the Week

**Monday:** 2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22; Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Lk 2:41-51a

**Tuesday:** Ez 47:1-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; Jn 5:1-16

**Wednesday:** Is 49:8-15; Ps 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18; Jn 5:17-30

**Thursday:** Ex 32:7-14; Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23; Jn 5:31-47

**Friday:** Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Ps 34:17-18, 19-20, 21, 23; Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

**Saturday:** Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Ps 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 11; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38

**Sunday:** Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45 or Jn 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

## Mass Intentions for the Week

<b>Saturday, Mar 18</b>	5:00PM	Joan & Raymond Felton, by Claire
<b>Sunday, Mar 19</b>	8:00AM	Anthony & Anne Washkevich, by James & Mary Woods
	10:00AM	Leonarda Borysewicz, by Granddaughter
	12:00PM	Intention of Parishioners
<b>Monday, Mar 20</b>	8:00AM	The Collins & Lynch Families, by Marty Collins
<b>Tuesday, Mar 21</b>	8:00AM	Florence Bongiorno, by The Mazzeo Family
<b>Wednesday, Mar 22</b>	8:00AM	Beatrice Vassallo-English, by Diana Manahan
<b>Thursday, Mar 23</b>	8:00AM	Helene Saladini, by Pat & Frank Sellinger
<b>Friday, Mar 24</b>	8:00AM	Mabel Arinzeh, by St. Martin de Porres Society
<b>Saturday, Mar 25</b>	5:00PM	Intention of Parishioners
<b>Sunday, Mar 26</b>	8:00AM	Rose Gessner, by Rita Stuewe
	10:00AM	Dave Moynihan, by The Misuraca Family
	12:00PM	Timothy Connell, by The Connell 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](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  
 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  
 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  
 Robert Pellegrino  
 Jim Pettit  
 Christina Pietrowiak  
**Valerie Polci**  
 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  
 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*

Fiorello Babe Parente, father of Marilyn Parente, Robert Zisk, Priscilla Ntigbu

# Reflect



## Smile with Your Family



Marvin and Tina were not a very religious couple but tried their best; they only went to church once a year. As they were leaving the church, the priest said, "Marvin, it sure would be nice to see you and Tina at Mass more than once a year" "I know," replied Marvin, "We're very busy people, leading active lives but at least we keep the Ten Commandments" "That's great," the priest said. "I'm glad to hear that you keep the Commandments." "Yes, we sure do" Marvin said proudly, "Tina keeps six of them and I keep the other four." 😊

Q: How can you drop a raw egg onto a concrete floor without cracking it? A: No worries, concrete floors are very hard to crack. 😊

An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him, "How do you expect to be saved and get to Heaven?" The boy thought it over and said,

"Well, I'll run in and out and keep slamming the door until St. Peter says, 'For Heaven's sake, young man, come in or stay out!'" 😊

Wife: "In my dream, I saw you in a jewelry store and you bought me a diamond ring." Husband: "I had the same dream and I saw your dad paying the bill." 😊

A: I have the perfect son. B: Does he smoke? A: No, he doesn't. B: Does he drink whiskey? A: No, he doesn't. B: Does he ever come home late? A: No, he doesn't. B: I guess you really do have the perfect son. How old is he? A: He will be six months old next Wednesday. 😊

David meets his friend John after a decade of not seeing one another and asked: "What are you doing these days?" John: "PHD." David: "Wow! You're a doctor!" John: "No, Pizza Home Delivery." 😊



### Parenting Tune-Up

Teach your child two contradictory life lessons: 1. How to stand up for themselves. 2. How to forgive someone who has hurt them. Model it. Role play potential situations.



### Marriage Tune-Up

"Not as humans see does God see, because humans see the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7) Yes, love can be blind, but deep love sees beneath annoying habits to the inner goodness. Name one positive quality that you see in your beloved that others might not see.

### A Lenten" Recall Notice!"

The maker of all human beings is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to the serious defect in the primary and central component or heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect has been technically termed, 'Sub sequential Internal Non-Morality,' or more commonly known as S-I-N, as it is primarily symptomized by loss of moral judgment. Some other symptoms are:

- (a) Loss of direction
- (b) Foul vocal emissions
- (c) Amnesia of origin
- (d) Lack of peace and joy
- (e) Selfish, or violent, behavior
- (f) Depression or confusion in the mental component

The manufacturer, who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory authorized repair and service, free of charge to correct this SIN defect, at numerous locations throughout the world. The number to call for the recall station in your area is: P-R-A-Y-E-R.

**WARNING:** Continuing to operate the human unit without correction, voids the manufacturer's warranty, exposing owner to dangers and problems too numerous to list. For free emergency service, call on J-E-S-U-S for prompt assistance at any location worldwide.

### Why is today known as "Laetare Sunday?"

*Laetare* is the first word — meaning "rejoice" — in the Latin text of today's entrance antiphon reflecting on **Isaiah 66:10-11: "Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult ..."**

On Laetare Sunday (fourth Sunday in Lent) the Church expresses hope and joy in the midst of our Lenten fasts and penances. The Ministers may wear pink vestments - or, more fittingly, rose - to indicate a glimpse of the joy that awaits us at Easter, just before we enter into the somber days

Cont'd  
Mar 19, 2023

## Reflect

### Why is today known as “Laetare Sunday?”

of Passiontide. Laetare Sunday is the Church’s way of giving us a “shot in the arm” as we approach the darkness and horror of the days through Good Friday and Holy Saturday. It’s an opportunity to savor and keep in the back of our minds what awaits us on Easter Sunday — the reality that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, and that our hearts will always be filled with joy!

### Modern Spiritual Blindness

*Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath." The blind man said: "One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." John 9:1-41*

A country preacher was listening to a seminary professor cast doubt on the core issues of the Faith and the authenticity of the claims of Jesus. When the professor finished his lecture, the elderly pastor got up, took an apple from his lunch bag and started eating it as he said, "Mr. Professor, I haven't read many of them books you quoted." Then he took another bite of the apple. "Mr. Professor, I don't know much about the great thinkers you mentioned," as he took still another bite of his apple. "Mr. Professor, I admit I haven't studied the Bible like you have," as he finished his apple and dropped it back in the bag. "I was just wondering, this apple that I just ate, was it sour or sweet? The Professor responded, "How could I know? I haven't tasted your apple." To which the old preacher replied, "With all due respect, sir, I was just wondering if you had ever had a taste of my Jesus?" The blind man says, "Whether or not the cure was approved by the FDA, I once was blind, but now I see." You all argue and explain all you want, but that's enough for me.

**Although the Pharisees have long since disappeared from history, there are still many among us who are blinded by the same pride and prejudice. Spiritual blindness is very common in modern times. Perhaps, the most awful disease in our country today is spiritual blindness. Such blindness refuses to see the truths of God's revelation. This blindness refuses even to admit that God or Christ exists. In their pride, the spiritually blind claim that everything ends with death and that there is no life after death. They propagate their errors and accuse believers of childish credulity and folly. They ignore the gifts of the intellect we all possess. God's revelation through Christ informs us that there is a future life awaiting us in which our spiritual faculties and our transformed bodies will be fully and fittingly glorified. According to Pope Benedict XVI, the miracle of the healing of the blind man is a sign that Christ wants not only to give us sight, but also open our interior vision, so that our faith may become ever deeper and we may recognize Him as our only Savior. He illuminates all that is dark in life and leads men and women to live as "children of the light"**

### "Lead kindly Light":

John Henry Cardinal Newman was a professor at Oxford University. When he was an Anglican priest, along with the other scholars, he started the Oxford movement. When he was thirty-two years old, his health was bad, and he took a break from his writings and went to Europe to recuperate. But unfortunately, he contracted a deadly fever. He wanted to return to England, but no transportation was available. As he waited, his life became lonely and tedious; he was experiencing great physical and emotional despair. It is then that he penned a beautiful hymn asking God for light:

***"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on; The night is dark, and I am far from home; Lead thou me on: Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see The distant scene-one step enough for me."***

In his confusion and distress, Newman prayed to the God of Light to lead him from darkness to light, from confusion to certainty, and from sickness to health. God heard his prayer and led him home safely. In 1845, he was converted to the Roman Catholic faith.

### Blinded by Prejudice

In the late 1700s, the manager of a large hotel in Baltimore refused lodging to a man dressed like a farmer. He turned the farmer away because he thought this fellow’s shabby appearance would discredit the reputation of his distinguished hotel. The farmer picked up his bag and left without saying a further word to anyone. Later that evening, the innkeeper discovered that he had turned away none other than the Vice President of the United States - Thomas Jefferson! Immediately, the manager sent a note of apology to the famed patriot, asking him to come back and be his guest in the hotel. Jefferson replied by instructing the messenger as follows, “Tell him I have already reserved a room. I value his good intentions highly, but if he has no room for a common American farmer, then he has no room for the vice-president of the United States of America.”

***We need to get rid of cultural blindness. Our culture also has blind-spots. Often it is blind to things like love, happiness, marriage, and true, committed sexual love in marriage. Our culture has become anesthetized to the violence, the sexual innuendo, and the enormous suffering of the world around us. Our culture, our media, our movies and our values, are often blind as to what it means to love selflessly and sacrificially. Our culture, in spite of scientific proofs, is blind to the reality that life begins at the moment of conception, and it callously promotes abortion. We con***

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## Blinded by Prejudice (cont'd)

tinue to advance destructive practices such as embryonic stem-cell research, homosexual “marriages,” euthanasia, and human cloning, and we refuse to see the consequences of godless behavior on human society. In the name of individual rights, the radical left in our society decries any public demonstration of religious beliefs and practices, or the public appearance of traditional values, questioning the substance of family values. The radical right, on the other hand, decries the immorality of our times, without lifting a finger to help the poor and the underprivileged and without ever questioning unjust foreign policies and wars. This cultural blindness can only be overcome as each one of us enters the living experience of having Jesus dwelling within us and within others, through personal prayer, meditative reading of the Bible and a genuine Sacramental life.

### “This much I know of Christ.”

The book *God’s Annoying Love for Imperfect People* by Michael Yaconeli tells the story of a man recently converted to Jesus and how an unbelieving friend sought to “see” why. “So you have been converted to Christ?” “Yes.” “Then you must know a great deal about Him. Tell me, what country was he born in?” “I don’t know.” “What was his age when he died?” “I don’t know.” “How many sermons did he preach?” “I don’t know.” “You certainly know very little for a man who claims to be converted to Christ.” “You are right. I am ashamed at how little I know about him. But this much I know: Three years ago I was a drunkard. I was in debt. My family was falling to pieces; they dreaded the sight of me. But now I have given up drink. We are out of debt. Ours is a happy home. My children eagerly await my return home each evening. All this Christ has done for me. This much I know of Christ.”

*Does it not sound like the answers given by the blind man healed by Jesus? We need to allow Jesus to heal our spiritual blindness. Physiologically, the “blind-spot” is the part of our eye where vision is not experienced. It is the spot where the optic nerve enters the eye ball. A blind spot in a vehicle is an area around the vehicle that cannot be directly observed by the driver. In real life, we all have blind-spots – in our marriages, our parenting, our work habits, and our personalities. We often wish to remain in the dark, preferring darkness to light. It is even possible for the religious people in our day to be like the Pharisees: religious in worship, in frequenting the Sacraments, in prayer-life, in tithing, and in knowledge of the Bible – but blind to the poverty, injustice and pain around them. Let us remember, however,*

*that Jesus wants to heal our blind-spots. We need to ask him to remove from us the root causes of our blindness, namely, self-centeredness, greed, anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, addiction to evil habits and hardness of heart. Let us pray with the Scottish Bible scholar William Barclay, “God our Father, help us see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly.”*

### “Did you ever have a taste of Jesus?”

Bob Allred tells the story about a country preacher who was listening to a seminary professor cast doubt on the core issues of the Faith. When the professor finished his lecture, the elderly pastor got up, took an apple from his lunch bag and started eating it as he said, “Mr. Professor, I haven’t read many of them books you quoted.” Then he took another bite of the apple. “Mr. Professor, I don’t know much about the great thinkers you mentioned,” as he took still another bite of his apple. “Mr. Professor, I admit I haven’t studied the Bible like you have,” as he finished his apple and dropped it back in the bag. “I was just wondering, this apple that I just ate, was it sour or sweet? The Professor responded, “How could I know? I haven’t tasted your apple.” To which the old preacher replied, “With all due respect, sir, I was just wondering if you had ever had a taste of my Jesus?” The blind man says, “Whether or not the cure was approved by the FDA, I once was blind, but now I see.” You all argue and explain all you want, but that’s enough for me.

*We need to pray for clear vision: Peter Marshall, the former chaplain to the United States Congress used to pray, “Give us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for, because unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything.” Today’s Gospel challenges our ability to see clearly. Do we see a terrorist in every member of a particular religion? Do we see people who are addicted to drugs as outcasts and sinners? Do we fail to see God at work in our lives because He has shown us no miracles? Jonathan Swift said, “Vision is the art of seeing things invisible.” Let us remember that this gift belongs to those who can see the good hidden in the kernels of suffering and of failure. It resides in those who never give up hope. Let us pray for the grace to see and experience the presence of a loving and forgiving God.*



### CAN YOUR LENTEN EXPERIENCES BE BOTH SPIRITUALLY AND MENTALLY HEALTHY?



Besides ourselves, I'm sure we know many people who struggle with expressing their thoughts and feelings. Seven of our SMYLE youth at St. Matthias have formed a ministry focusing on Mental Health. Part of their outreach is to our community which includes writing for our Parish Bulletin, and planning upcoming events.

I'd like to introduce Carl Furtado who is a freshman attending Regis High School in Manhattan. I encourage you to reflect upon his thoughts about Mental Health.

*"According to the CDC, over 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder in their lifetime, so it is evident why practicing good mental self-care is important to staying healthy. But what is self-care? Defined loosely, self-care just means taking care of yourself so that you can stay in a state of mental healthiness, which, according to the Minnesota Department of Health, encompasses four main points: ·*

*The ability of an individual to understand his or her own abilities.*

*The ability to cope with the normal stresses of life.*

*The ability to work productively and fruitfully.*

*The ability to make a contribution to his or her community.*

*Self-care can take various forms, and it can include activities like reading a book, listening to music, just relaxing and taking a break, or even saying a gratitude prayer. Regularly practicing mental self-care can have a huge positive impact on our health, mentally and physically. You might also be asking, "What can I do to help those around me dealing with mental health issues?" One thing that each one of us can do is to help reduce the stigma. Many individuals will not seek treatment for their mental health issues because of the huge stigma associated with it. Reducing the stigma does not*

*have to be a big task - just make yourself aware of mental health. Two easy things to do are to stay informed about mental health and to not use mental health words when they should not be used. For example, saying something like "I am so depressed" when you are not actually depressed can be a factor in worsening the stigma, so not making remarks like these can make an impact." [Carl Furtado]*

In today's Gospel we are confronted with a young man living with the disability of blindness. Jesus' miracle is very "hands-on" and happens at the beginning of a long story displaying the effects of stigmas perpetuated by insecurities. Notice the judgmental words exchanged among the Pharisees, the parents of the man born blind and himself, and Jesus. It seems the Pharisees are perpetuating stigmas and instigating shame in an attempt to diminish the dramatic life-changing miracle. They seem to have the upper hand when they say "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" But Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see, 'so your sin remains.'"

What is the relationship between stigma and shame? If an individual lives with stigma, then they may live with the constant fear of feeling shame, of actively being shamed, or of shameful exposure—being made to feel that they are "inadequate", "unworthy", or "broken". Shame can be thought of as the impact or emotion that comes from stigma - such as feelings of embarrassment, self-hate, sense of failure, feeling hopeless. These experiences commonly cause mental distress and harm.

This prevents the Pharisees from truly seeing Jesus in their presence. Only the man, who can now both physically and spiritually see, is the most stable. The truth is that we've all been born spiritu-

ally blind due to original sin. We tend to focus on protecting ourselves from more shame or anything or anyone that makes us uncomfortable. The Pharisees were afraid that if this miraculous healing of physical and spiritual blindness caused people to believe in Jesus, then their status and privilege as Jewish leaders would be in jeopardy. The parents had to carefully choose their words and play it "safe" to avoid being ostracized from their community, and thrown out just like their son.

Through our own Baptism, Jesus gives us the insight, power, and grace to see the whole person - just like Jesus sees us - not only one's disability or shame. Only the healed man could unapologetically speak the truth. Because of his faith in Jesus, he was able to see more clearly than the Pharisees, who supposedly had excellent sight!

Today on this Laetare Sunday we see the priest and deacon wear bright rose colored vestments to encourage us to hang-in-there because we've reached the midpoint of Lent! This visually shows that what we do during Lent can authentically change us to become no longer spiritually and walking in spiritual darkness. To see ourselves and others as God sees - is another way to become "perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect!"

**This Sunday - March 19<sup>th</sup> - our NeXt Level Teens will be providing an engaging Mental Health event concerning "COPING" which will touch upon many Teen moments which can generate either tears or smiles. We ask that you encourage anyone in Grades 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> to join their peers in the School Cafeteria from 4pm to 5:30pm.**

I hope to also see you on Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 7pm, as our youth lead the community praying at the Mental Health

Cont'd on next page

## From Our Pastoral Staff (cont'd)

Stations of the Cross.

I can't wait to "see" what you'll do the rest of this Lent to help others see how your faith can really make a brighter change in your life and those you'll bless!

Prayers for better vision during Lent!

Deacon John & The SMYLE - NeXt Level  
Mental Health Ministry



## 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 last week)

And so we come to its culmination. The Gospel relates that Jesus "was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light" (Mt 17:2). This is the "summit", the goal of the journey. At the end of their ascent, as they stand on the mountain heights with Jesus, the three disciples are given the grace of seeing him in his glory, resplendent in supernatural light. That light did not come from without, but radiated from the Lord himself. The divine beauty of this vision was incomparably greater than all the efforts the disciples had made in the ascent of Tabor. During any strenuous mountain trek, we must keep our eyes firmly fixed on the path; yet the panorama that opens up at the end amazes us and rewards us by its grandeur. So too, the synodal process may often seem arduous, and at times we may become discouraged. Yet what awaits us at the end is undoubtedly something wondrous and amazing, which will help us to understand better God's will and our mission in the service of his kingdom.



The disciples' experience on Mount Tabor was further enriched when, alongside the transfigured Jesus, Moses and Elijah appeared, signifying respectively the Law and the Prophets (cf. Mt 17:3). The newness of Christ is at the same time the fulfillment of the ancient covenant and promises; it is inseparable from God's history with his people and discloses its deeper meaning. In a similar way, the synodal journey is rooted in the Church's tradition and at the same time open to newness. Tradition is a source of inspiration for seeking new paths and for avoiding the opposed temptations of immobility and improvised experimentation.

(continued next week)

## Connect

### 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 25<sup>th</sup> (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>



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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.

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!

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

## Give (and Receive!)

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023				Last Year's Total
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	\$10,523.00	\$23,236.25	<b>\$33,759.25</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
			<b>Month-to-date Total</b>	<b>Mar Total Last Yr</b>
			<b>\$66,432.00</b>	\$111,560.50
			<b>Current Year-to-date Total</b>	<b>Year-to-date as of</b>
			<b>\$1,006,974.52</b>	\$1,008,537.07



### 2023 Bishop's Annual Appeal Renewed and Sent on Mission by the Eucharist

This weekend, parishes throughout the Diocese of Metuchen are celebrating **Bishop's Annual Appeal In-Pew Weekend**. Our goal is for every family to participate. Every gift, no matter the size, is important and greatly appreciated. Together, we are keeping Christ's presence alive in the world today. Thank you for actively participating in this mission by your financial support.

You can find the link to the Bishop's Annual Appeal Video by going to <https://diometuchen.org/BAA>.

### Stewardship Reflection Mar 19, 2023 4th Sunday of Lent

**“Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7**

How often do we invest our time, talent and treasure in creating an appearance that does not matter at all to God? We strive to impress with our clothing, home, career, possessions, car and other marks of distinction. But none of these illusions of greatness will impress God. Instead, He will look into our hearts to see how much we loved Him, how much we loved others and how we showed that love by the way we used our time, talent and treasure here on earth.

### Reflexiónese 19 de marzo de 2023 4º domingo de Cuaresma

**“Pues Dios no ve como el hombre ve, pues el hombre mira la apariencia exterior, pero el Señor mira el corazón”. 1 SAMUEL 16: 7**

¿Qué tan a menudo invertimos nuestro tiempo, talento y tesoros para crear una apariencia que no le importa para nada a Dios? Tendemos a impresionar con nuestra vestimenta, casa, carrera, posesiones, automóvil y otras marcas de distinción. Pero ninguna de esas ilusiones de grandeza impresionará a Dios. En lugar de eso, Él mirará dentro de nuestros corazones para ver cuánto lo amamos, cuánto amamos a los demás y cómo mostramos ese amor en la forma en que usamos nuestro tiempo, talento y tesoro aquí en la tierra.

## 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.

**DATE:** SATURDAY, March 25th,

**TIME:** 10:00 - 1:30AM

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

## Connect with Our Local Community



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

### Choices Matter – A Critical Life Issues Conference , March 25, 2023

\*

The Diocese of Metuchen's Office of Human Life and Dignity presents "Choices Matter – A Critical Life Issues Conference which will be held at the St. John Neumann Pastoral Center in Piscataway on **Saturday, March 25, 2023. An Opening Mass will be celebrated by Bishop James Checchio at 9:00 AM and the conference will begin at 10:00 AM and end at 3:30 pm.** The parish will pay for those who want to attend.



### STAND WITH THE EARTH HOUR ON MARCH 25TH

Earth Hour is a special global event. It is held annually to raise awareness about the importance of protecting our planet. The event is a timely reminder of the need to take action on climate change. On this day, people are encouraged to switch off all non-essential lights and electronic devices for one hour to save energy and overall reducing greenhouse gas emissions. On **Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> 2023**, people all over the world will be turning off their lights for one hour to celebrate Earth Hour Day. **It will start at 8:30 pm local time and end at 9:30 pm local time.**

The point of Earth Hour is not just to save energy for one hour; it's also a symbolic global event that shows we can all make a difference in the fight against climate change. If we all work together, even small changes can make a big difference!

## 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  
**Finance Council**  
[@stmatthias.net](mailto:@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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- Tuesday, 10/25

**November 2022**

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- Tuesday, 11/29

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