St. Barnabas
A Catholic Community in Bellmore, New York
Since 1912

Rev. Adrian McHugh, Pastor
Rev. Charles Omotu
Rev. Francis Agyeman
Deacon Bernard F. Sherlock

Rectory Office
2320 Bedford Avenue,
Bellmore, NY 11710
516-785-0054  Fax: 516-221-7789
Monday - Thursday: 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM;
Friday: 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM;
(Closed Weekdays: 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM)
Saturday & Sunday: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Emergency Only: 516-280-0359

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School
Principal, Ms. Leeann Graziose
516-785-5709

St. Barnabas Christian Formation
Mrs. Marjorie Lampert
516-785-0130

Social Ministry
Mrs. Alice Witt
516-785-6243

Music Ministry
Mr. William R. Dione

Youth Ministry
Mrs. Margaret Harnisch

Pastoral Care
Sister William Noreen Reilly, S.C.

Business & Personnel Manager
Mr. John G. Nappi

www.stbarnabasny.org 02/07/16 Find us on Facebook

MASS TIMES : Monday to Friday: 6:30 and 9:00 AM
Saturday: 8:00 AM  See the Bulletin for the Holy Day Schedule
Saturday Vigil: 4:30 and 7:00 PM
Sunday: 7:00, 9:00, 10:30 AM, 12:00 Noon and 5:00 PM
10.15 AM in the Holy Family Chapel

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated on the second, third and fourth
Sundays of the month. The Pre-Baptism Class is held in the Church on the
first Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM.  Please contact the rectory for an
appointment with a priest.
The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated on Saturday from 12:30 to
1:30 PM or by appointment with a priest.
For the Sacrament of Matrimony contact the rectory for an appointment
with a priest.
The Sacrament of the Sick is celebrated on the fourth Saturday of every
month following the 8:00 AM Mass. To arrange a visit to a sick person by
a priest, contact the rectory.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, February 8</td>
<td>6:30 AM</td>
<td>Margaret Fallon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Mary DiCanio</td>
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<td>Mariano Pesigan</td>
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<td>Frank J. Seminara</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 9</td>
<td>6:30 AM</td>
<td>Albert Wildeman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Rose Marie Massimillo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 10</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
<td>Masses at 6:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 12 Noon, 8:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prayer Services at 4:15 PM &amp; 6:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 11</td>
<td>6:30 AM</td>
<td>Richard Mistretta</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Deceased Members</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of the Dorothy Healy Family</td>
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<td>Friday, February 12</td>
<td>6:30 AM</td>
<td>Rev. Edward J. Muhs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Dorothy Byrne</td>
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<td>Saturday, February 13</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Msgr. William J. Murray</td>
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<td>5th Pastor of St. Barnabas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Francis</td>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>Carol Rebentisch</td>
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<td>Margaret Quinn</td>
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<td>Vincent Stuckey</td>
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<td>Raymond Vogts</td>
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<td>Margaret Julian</td>
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<td>Kathleen Hansen</td>
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<td>Fr. Charles</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Edward Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, February 14</td>
<td>First Sunday of Lent</td>
<td>7:00 AM  For the People of Our Parish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Francis</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Lucy Schiavone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Charles</td>
<td>10:15 AM</td>
<td>Margaret Zimmerman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Gus</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Joseph Tavella</td>
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<td>Fr. Gus</td>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>John Mascitelli</td>
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<td>Fr. Charles</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>Andrew Chisholm</td>
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We pray for our recently deceased
Judith Delsignore
Gerard V. Curley, Sr.
Florence K. Lee

Bread & Wine
The Eucharistic Bread & Wine is offered for the Family of Gerard Curley from the Spillane Family.

Lent begins
Ash Wednesday
February 10th
Ashes will be distributed after the homily at the following times:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:30 AM</td>
<td>Mass</td>
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<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Noon</td>
<td>Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15 PM</td>
<td>Prayer Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Prayer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 PM</td>
<td>Mass</td>
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Check out the range of CDs, books, booklets, and DVDs available in St. Barnabas for a modest donation.

The Bible Sharing Group have kindly agreed to stock and maintain our Lighthouse showcase. At the Bible Sharing Group we love to talk about our Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy reading and discussing the Holy Bible. We share personal feelings and understanding of scripture. We study what the Bible has to say about different things. For example: What does the bible say about anger or fear, love, marriage, faith and many other subjects that we all experience in our lives? Other times we read the scriptures and use the Little Rock Scripture Study, which is a Catholic commentary of the bible.

Sometimes we read a book of scripture from beginning to end and we stop to share on the different points we find of importance or interest. At times we watch a Christian movie. We have been getting together on Thursday nights from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM since December 2, 1993. We meet at the St. Barnabas Rectory Conference Room.
A French priest says it actually happened to him. An armed robber accosted him on a dark back street in Paris and demanded his wallet. As the priest opened his coat to reach for the wallet, the thief caught sight of the clerical collar for the first time and immediately apologized: "Never mind, Father, I didn't realize you were a priest - I'll be on my way." The priest was relieved, of course, and good naturedly offered the man a cigar. "No, thank you, Father," said the robber; "I'm giving up smoking for Lent." Obviously, that man hadn't gotten the whole message on what the Christian faith was about. But then again, this story reflects a truth about modern society; it's amazing how people can rationalize some pretty hefty sins while holding on to a social etiquette.

Lent, which begins for us this week, has historically been a time for Christians to exercise their spiritual muscles of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Or to put it another way — GIVE UP, TAKE UP, LIFT UP, LOOK UP. This is our theme for Lent 2016 in St. Barnabas.

First, TAKE UP PRAYER. Most of us would probably like to improve this part of our life, even if we seldom pray, or feel we do a poor job when we do pray. To help you to pray please pick up your free copy of 'Sacred Reading.' These books will be available at all Masses and Services on Ash Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday children are invited to take a copy of '40 Clues for 40 days' to guide through this ancient yet powerful form of prayer known as sacred reading. Enjoy! The little boy understood that God knows the heart, and that prayer must be sincere. God looks upon the heart and acknowledges sincerity. Please take our children’s book to discover more about Lent.

Lent also is about GIVING UP sin and bad habits. Let's GIVE instead to something positive like the LENTEN RICE BOWL appeal from Catholic Relief Services. Giving always blesses the giver. On Ash Wednesday take a RICE BOWL and place it in a prominent place in your home. Return it with your gift on Palm Sunday, March 20th.


Please also LOOK UP the bulletin for more details about all these Lenten Spiritual Disciplines as well as times for Confession, Stations of Cross and information on Three Tuesday Evenings of Reflection in March with guest speakers and Benediction. Why not also attend daily Mass during Lent at 6:30am or 9am for Lent.
Lent 2016 at St. Barnabas

GIVE UP

Put this Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl and Lenten calendar in a prominent place to use daily. Your gift of giving will help many.

TAKE UP

This book will help you discover a powerful ancient form of prayer known as sacred reading. Our gift to you.

LOOK UP

Check the Bulletin for all other Parish & Diocesan events.

- Times for Confession
- Stations of Cross on Fridays
- St. Barnabas Evenings of Reflection with guest speakers & Benediction. March 1, 8 & 15.
- Why not also attend Daily Mass at 6:30am or 9am for Lent.

LIFT UP

It’s time for a faith lift!

Parish Mission February 21-24

Financial Reports

Weekend Collections
2/01/15: $14,869.00
1/31/16: $20,585.00

Parish Families Registered 5,005
# Envelopes Mailed 1,463
# Envelopes Used 686
# Envelopes 2/1/15 589

2015 Catholic Ministries Appeal
Goal Amount: $109,100.00
Total Pledged: $127,940.00
Total Received: $127,510.00
Total # of Donors: 711

Year End Contribution
Call the Rectory if you wish to receive a contribution statement for 2015.

Second Collection Next Weekend
The Church in Need
Monies collected at this time will be shared among three areas of the world where there is particular need for help.
- Church in Central and Eastern Europe - Collection provides support for pastoral programs and makes scholarships available for students studying to serve their local church.
- Church in Latin America faces many challenges. Natural disasters caused lasting damage to the Church, while a significant loss of parishioners to migration and to other faiths, the inability to support itself financially, and a lack of priests and religious to help effectively minister to the large number of Catholics continue to trouble the region.
- Church in Africa - funds will go to assisting countries where poverty, sickness and political strife prevent people from living in dignity.

The Week at a Glance

Sunday:
10:00 AM Cub Scout Communion Breakfast School Cafeteria
11:15 AM Family Music Practice, Holy Family Chapel
7:30 PM Al-Anon Meeting, School Cafeteria

Monday:
10:00 AM Level 1 Parent Meeting Holy Family Chapel
7:00 PM Level 1 Parent Meeting Church
8:00 PM Charismatic Prayer Group, Holy Family Chapel

Tuesday:
7:00 PM Family Music Practice, Holy Family Chapel
7:00 PM Catholic Daughters Meeting School Cafeteria
7:30 PM Respect Life Meeting Rectory Meeting Room

Wednesday: ASH WEDNESDAY
No Religious Education Classes
7:00 PM RCIA Meeting, Convent Meeting Room
7:30 PM Al-Anon Meeting, Rectory Meeting Room

Thursday:
7:00 PM Bible Study, Rectory Meeting Room

Friday:
1:30 PM Stations of the Cross Church
7:00 PM Youth Group School Cafeteria

Saturday:
12:30 PM Reconciliation, Church
**Rules of Fast and Abstinence**
During the season of Lent the Church calls us to fast and abstain. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are fast days. Fast means those between the ages of 18 and 59 limit themselves to one full meal and eat nothing between meals. The other meals on a fast day are light meals. All the Fridays of Lent, as well as Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, are also days of abstinence, which means that those 14 years of age and older are to abstain from eating meat.

**Operation Rice Bowl**
Working together as a faith community, our parish will again participate in Operation Rice Bowl this Lent. “Rice Bowl” is a special Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services which gives the parish a unique opportunity to pray, fast, learn and share, as we are called to do during Lent. Our Lenten offering to Operation Rice Bowl supports Catholic Relief Services as it works to alleviate human suffering in more than 87 countries. The Rice Bowls and a Lenten Calendar with a daily reflection for Lent will be distributed on Ash Wednesday. If you would like to participate, please take a Rice Bowl and Calendar. When Lent ends, the contributions you have saved in your own rice bowl should be returned in check form, made payable to St. Barnabas Church. Please put your donation in an envelope marked RICE BOWL and place it in the collection basket by March 20th. Our total donation as a parish will then be forwarded to Catholic Relief Services. Thanks for anything you might do to help.

**St. Vincent de Paul Society**
Serving the needy of the Parish is the main purpose of SVDP. We strive to help individuals and families meet their basic needs. This can include limited financial support for rent and financial monthly expenses as well as food. We provide resources to help make you self-sufficient and furnish a list of agencies and programs for assistance.

**Pre-Cana 2016 Winter Schedule**
Opening Sunday, February 21st at 6:00 PM, closing April 17th at 6:00 PM. Engaged couples should contact the rectory to register for Pre-Cana as soon as possible.

**RCIA News**
As we begin Lent, our Candidates and Catechumens enter the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. On Saturday, February 13th, at the 4:30 PM Mass, the Parish will participate in the Rite of Sending these men and women to the Bishop for Diocesan recognition. Our Catechumen, Richard Hueglin; will sign his name in the Book of Enrollment for the Elect at the Rite of Election on Sunday, February 14th at 7:00 PM at St. Rose of Lima in Massapequa. On February 21st at 2:30 PM, Kasey Estey, Louis Romano, Yev Guyduy and Kevin Coons will participate in the Call to Continuing Conversion at St. Rose of Lima. Please keep these people in your prayers as they continue their journey toward the Easter reception of the sacraments.

**Catholic Daughters of Americas**
The next meeting of Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court Mother Seton #2413 will be held on Tuesday, February 9th at 7:00 PM in the School Cafeteria. Please bring an unwrapped gift for the babies and moms of the Life Center for our Annual Baby Shower. Gloria Schreiber of the Life Center will be our guest speaker. For information please call Jackie at 781-7846 after 7:00 PM.

**Knights of Columbus**
Columbus Hall is now available for rental. The Bellmore Knights of Columbus moved to a new location at 101 Frederick Ave. off Bedford Ave. in town. This new facility is now ready and available for rental. This is a state-of-the-art facility perfect for parties up to 80 guests. Please think of the Bellmore K of C for your celebration events such as Birthdays, Anniversaries, Wedding Rehearsals, Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, Business Meetings, etc. For details on hall rental please call 785-9407.
Parish Mission February 21-24

And They Recognized Him…

St. Barnabas Lenten Parish Mission
Sunday, February 21st - Wednesday, February 24th

Topics & Presenters

“Recognizing God In Our World”
Sunday, February 21st at 7:30 PM
Monsignor Jim Vlaun, President & CEO, Telecare

“Recognizing God in the Loving Embrace of Forgiveness”
(Including the Sacrament of Reconciliation)
Monday, February 22nd at 7:30 PM
Fr. John Sureau, Associate Pastor, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Lindenhurst

“Recognizing God in Our Hearts: Doing Our Soul Work”
Tuesday, February 23rd at 7:30 PM
Fr. Michael Holzmann, Pastor, Holy Cross Church, Nesconset

“Recognizing Him in the Breaking of the Bread”
(Within the celebration of the Eucharist)
Wednesday, February 24th at 7:30 PM
Monsignor Joe DeGrocco, Pastor, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Lindenhurst

The four presenters will also preach the homily at all the Masses the weekend of February 20th & 21st.
Please save the dates and we hope to see you at the Mission.
Tending Your Grieving Heart
Valentine’s Day can be a particularly difficult time for someone who has lost a loved one. Join the Bereavement Specialist of Good Shepherd Hospice for a free workshop offering encouragement, coping strategies and support on Tuesday, February 9th at Mercy Medical Center, 100 N. Village Ave. Rockville Centre from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM. Seating is limited. Registration is required. Please call (631)465-6262.

Marian Healing Ministry
Continuing the Marian Healing Ministry of Fr. Dennis Kelleher CSsR, there will be a Healing Mass at St. Anastasia’s Church, 45-14 245th St., Douglaston Little Neck, on Tuesday, February 9th. The Rosary, Mass and Healing Service begins at 7:00 PM. The celebrant is Fr. Augustine Fernando assisted by Deacons Joseph Mercolino and Michael Vicinanza. Call (718) 631-4454. Come experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the presence, healing touch of the Our Lord and the intercession of Mary the Mother of God and our mother.

Catholics, Capitalism, and Climate
Wednesday, February 17th, 2:00 PM, Molloy College, Madison Theater, 1000 Hempstead Ave., Rockville Centre. Molloy College presents Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Primary Contributor to the Recent Encyclical Laudato Si (Praise Be to You: On Care for Our Common Home). Panel discussion to follow, moderated by Fr. James Martin, Editor-at-large, America magazine. Event is free, but reservations are recommended. Contact Molloy College’s Office of Advancement at 323-4600 or event@molloy.edu.

Time of Deep Darkness and Radiant Light
Join this retreat to learn to never fear the darkness and to live more fully in the light. Saturday, February 20th from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Donation is $60 which includes breakfast and lunch at the Tabor Retreat Center, 60 Anchor Ave. Oceanside. For information call 536-3004.
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Regional School
2341 Washington Ave. Bellmore, NY 11710
Visit us at: www.steas.com

Our Time

A parent and child program for children ages 2 to 3 years old. OUR TIME offers a variety of age-appropriate activities, such as arts and crafts, live music, story time, and play time in a faith-based environment.

Classes are conducted in a well-structured classroom setting and are taught by Sabina Lamb. Mrs. Lamb is the Leader of Family Music at St. Barnabas at the 10:15 AM Mass.

OUR TIME meets once a week for one hour from September through June.
Sessions are offered on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday mornings from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Regional School.*

Space is limited!

For more information, please call:
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Regional School 785-5709
Or Sabina Lamb 781-9834

Catholic Schools:
The Good News In Education!

*Days and time subject to change pending enrollment.

Youth Ministry

Our next night is Friday, February 12th - 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. Open to all Middle Schoolers and High School teens help run the night. We’ll have plenty of food and games!

Never been here before?
No problem,
Come down we’d love for you to join us!

Also in February we’ll meet on Friday, February 26th! High school students - come help us run these nights!

If you are a teen or an adult who wants to join our Core team? E-mail Peggy at stbarnabasyouthministry@gmail.com

National Catholic Schools Week

National Catholic Schools Week was observed last week. This year’s theme, was “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.” The week highlights the educational and community successes of Catholic schools around the county. One example is that an estimated 98 percent of students graduate from high school and 86 percent of Catholic school graduates attend college. This percentage has been consistent over the past 20 years.

About 1.9 million students are currently educated in nearly 6,600 Catholic schools around the country. Students receive an education that prepares them for higher education, a competitive work environment, but most importantly, living a Christian life of virtue in a challenging society.

With the cooperation of parents, the school and the Church, we provide an educational environment that keeps Christ at the center of each child’s life within a challenging and nurturing educational setting.
AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST & FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

Please join in congratulating the February recipients:

Followers of Jesus:
Julianna Cantelmo, Dean Cioffi, Hunter Ciolli, Kagan Doyle, Derek Duane, Taylor Fernandez, Daniel Graziose, Ryan Jewels, Ella Nasso, Beatrice Portieles, Franco Ribertone, Austin Rincon, Derek Rodriguez, P. J. Romanelli, Damien Sileo, Xavier Small, Ana Szymanski, Natalie Tomei, Tiffany Williams & Ava Wright

Ambassadors of Christ:

We are still accepting registration for our Fall 2016-2017 school year. If you are interested in a private tour, please contact Daryl Fallon at dfallon9356@steas.com
CLASS CANCELLATIONS
Will be posted on our website under the “Announcements” tab, as well as on KJOY-98.3FM; Cablevision Channel 12 and Verizon Fios 1. You can also check the parish Facebook page. Rule of thumb – if the Bellmore school district is closed we will cancel classes.

The Religious Education Program is in need of Adult volunteers to assist as Hall Monitors and Substitute Catechists. We have been having difficulty finding adults to substitute when a catechist cannot come in. Please consider helping!

IMPORTANT DATES

Confirmation will be held on Monday, May 23rd
Parents/students should have received a letter with the time of their Mass as well as the rehearsal information.

Monday, February 8th - Level 1 Parent Meeting 10:00 AM in the Holy Family Chapel OR 7:00 PM in the Upper Church.

Wednesday, February 10th - NO CLASSES – Ash Wednesday – Ashes distributed at all Masses – 6:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 8:00 PM and at the following Services: 4:15 PM in both the Church and Holy Family Chapel and 6:00 PM in the Church.

Monday, February 15th through Friday, February 19th – NO CLASSES – Winter Recess

Wednesday, February 24th – all level 5, 6 7 and 8 classes are cancelled. Please attend the last night of the Parish Mission.

* NOTE we will be holding classes at the 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM session for levels 1 through 4.

The Religious Education grade level calendars and the website will you keep informed of dates of classes, homework assignments, and requirements, as well as when there is no scheduled classes.
“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him.”

With these words from the very first paragraph of Pope Francis’ Bull of Indiction, Misericordiae Vultus (MV), proclaiming the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Isn’t that a great challenge for us — that we might become more effective witnesses of mercy? Imagine if we could really do that! Maybe that’s a good Lenten project for each and every one of us: to become a more effective witness of mercy!

We know that Lent prepares us for the celebration of Easter, either by preparing us for the Sacraments of Initiation, or by preparing us to recall our own Baptism. Doing penance is central to this. However, if we are going to truly live Lent and not just “observe” it, we must make a true response to God’s call to renewal, and accept the spiritual challenge to cooperate with God’s grace by making a decision, a plan and a continuous effort.

To really live this Jubilee Year in keeping with its motto “Merciful like the Father,” we must experience the proof of God’s love for us: “He gives his entire self, always, freely, asking nothing in return. He comes to our aid whenever we call upon him.” (MV 14)

The Sacrament of Penance is for us one of the most powerful ways (or proofs!) we have of experiencing the mercy of God, and of renewing our baptismal dedication and dignity. Through the mercy of God, that sacrament becomes the opportunity to restore baptismal innocence, an innocence that becomes marred by sin.

Continuing through Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord this year, we will explore various aspects of the Sacrament of Penance, so that we might use this time of Lent for conversion and reconciliation in order to experience the richness of the Father’s mercy and, come Easter, celebrate the Paschal Mystery of the Lord’s death and resurrection with minds and hearts renewed by God’s mercy.

US Army:
General Paul Hurley, PFC David Calame, Jr., PFC Justin Oney, Chaplain Spec Kevin A. Bauer, Major Eric Reid, SPFC Sean Luhman, SPC Andrew Crowley III, Lt. Richard Joseph Holahan, Major Benjamin H. Klimkowski, Staff Sgt. Eric S. Loughran, Staff Sgt. Christopher Price, SPC Kieran Riordan, First Lt Marlene Dwyer.

National Guard:

US Navy:

US Marines:

US Air Force:
Capt. McLean G. Bethea, Nicholas P. Wright, Rev. Major Timothy Hirten

US Merchant Marine:
Lt. J.G. Eric Stumpel.
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Holy Father has sent us all a Message for this Lent of the Jubilee of Mercy. I want to call your attention to it and urge you to read it. It is beautiful, concrete and opens up to us rich and inspiring ways to make this Lent a deep and wonderful journey of faith as we seek God’s merciful love and receive it during the forty days that we travel together to celebrate the Sacred Triduum of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

In his letter, Pope Francis says: Let’s not waste the season of Lent! He goes on to call Mary, the perfect icon of the Church which evangelizes and is evangelized by the Holy Spirit. We too, who make up the Church, must imitate Mary and open ourselves to the Spirit as she did at the Annunciation. Led by the Spirit this Lent we can become ourselves evangelizers of God’s mercy by our words and our actions.

Pope Francis commends to us the time honored Corporal and Spiritual “Works of Mercy”. He says, God’s mercy transforms our hearts to become merciful, inspiring us to love of neighbor. Take one a day or use them to do an act of kindness. Corporal: feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; welcome the stranger; care for the sick; visit the prisoners; bury the dead. The Spiritual: convert the sinner; instruct the ignorant; counsel the doubtful; comfort the sorrowful; bear wrongs patiently; forgive injuries; pray for the living and the dead.

For me the most beautiful part of his message is when he speaks of God’s merciful love for His Chosen People and the faithfulness of His love as a covenant that, despite all the sins of God’s people, He will always be faithful, always forgives, and will never cease to love us. The Pope takes that and invites us to see God’s compassion for us His people as a model and an inspiration of marriage between a man and a woman and the love that brings children into the world as part of a family. God’s unceasing, faithful love (Hebrew: hesed) culminates in the Incarnation of His Son as the bridegroom who does everything to win over His bride, the Church. He even dies for her!

And He does that for us now and always. Make this Lent a time when you open yourselves up to that love, experience that love through the reconciling and healing sacrament of Penance; let this love heal your hearts and renew your faith and your commitment to your spouse, your children, your parents, all the members of your family, your neighbors, your friends, all from whom you may be alienated. God offers that love to you. You who accept His love then must be givers of that love to others.

May God’s words of love and reconciliation dwell in our hearts this Lent of Mercy and may God bless our Church here on Long Island and make us instruments of His merciful love to others.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

[Signature]