

Dear Friends in Christ,

I send greetings to you if you read my pastoral message every week, or as a visitor reading it for the first time, or you may be a parishioner who felt moved to celebrate this joyful day with your parish family, even if it's been some time since your last visit. In any case, welcome! I send all of you Christmas Greetings! May the gift of the Christ Child which promises us Peace, Love and Joy truly fill all your hearts on this most joyful day.

For the past two months, our parish has been involved in *Sharing our Gifts – A Parish Campaign*. Many parishioners have made a commitment to increase their weekly donations to Immaculate Conception so that we may be very soon financially strong and secure. Thankfully, because of the generosity of those parishioners who took part, by way of their commitment in increasing their weekly contributions, we are on our way to that security.

Another gift that came from the initial weeks of the campaign is the realization that this parish is indeed a spiritually strong and vibrant parish. Our parish was spotlighted in a recent *Cardinal's Appeal Newsletter* which allowed the whole Archdiocese see how we have come together as a family and succeeded in our parish campaign. I would like to take this opportunity on this Christmas Day to give you what I will call, for lack of better description, '*The State of the Parish*'.

Two months ago, our parish sent to the Archdiocese the Annual Sacramental Report. That report informs the Archdiocese of our activities over the past year. It has indeed been an active year here at Immaculate Conception. Over 570 weekday and Sunday Masses were offered and the Holy Eucharist was distributed to thousands and thousands in Church, to the aging sick at home and to the hospital-bound. 44 new Christians were received at our baptismal font and last winter 32 of our second graders for the first time received God's forgiveness and in May stood at God's altar and were nourished by the Holy Eucharistic, the Bread of Life. 32 teens were confirmed by Bishop Dominick J. Lagonegro in October. The organ played 'Here Comes the Bride' eleven times...sadly, the organ played at funerals for 22 souls whom God called to Himself. Seven of our elder parishioners received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick at their homes. Deacon Marino along with our Ministers of Holy Communion visited close to 45 home bound parishioners every week. Our RCIA program, under the direction of Deacon Sadowski prepared and catechized 6 individuals who were received into our parish community at the Easter Vigil. Our School of Religious Education instructed 241 children each week, thanks to the dedication of Lynne DeVuono our Coordinator and our faithful Catechists. Our Parish Food Pantry fed 90 families last month for a hardy Thanksgiving Day dinner and handed out food last week to 60 families for Christmas. We also see on a weekly basis roughly 65 families come to our pantry for basic food needs. The pantry is possible mostly through the continuing generosity of our parishioners. Not only do our parishioners give, but many also volunteer weekly and some, who are involved in more than one activity or group, volunteer two days a week! Our Parish Volunteers serve in the Food Pantry, Hospitality Committee, the Men's Club, Martha's Group, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Ushers, Sacristians, Choir, CYO Basketball and our parish sponsored Boy and Girl Scouts as adult leaders.

If anything over the past two months, that I hope and pray we remain mindful of, is the fact that the people and clergy of Immaculate Conception are indeed showing themselves as a strong Catholic presence in Stony Point and Tomkins Cove.

May God continue to bless the Corporal and Spiritual works of Mercy that is being done through Immaculate Conception Church. May the grace of this Christmas day and season remain in our hearts minds and souls long after the decorations are gone. May the new year coming upon us be a year of true lasting peace for all.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



Rev. Herbert T. DeGaris
Administrator

“On behalf of the Catechists, staff and myself, I would like to wish the entire Immaculate Conception faith community a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and blessed New Year.” – Lynne DeVuono, Coordinator

The Religious Education office will be closed from Friday, December 23 through Monday, January 2nd.

CALENDAR RAFFLE

Calendar Raffles will be available for purchase at the Rectory. We depend heavily on this fundraiser to defray the costs of maintaining the Parish Religious Education building. Tickets are \$10.00 each, hold 120 opportunities to win cash prizes ranging from \$25.00 to \$100.00 over a period of four months. Raffles will be drawn daily from February 1, 2017 through May 31, 2017. These can be great teacher gifts, stocking stuffers or a Parish Lottery ticket to give to your family, friends and co-workers and our odds are better than the regular lottery! What a great way to spread our parish family name! We thank you in advance for participating in our Religious Education fundraiser.

MASS ATTENDANCE CARDS

A Reminder for Parents of First Communion and Confirmation Candidates: Please remember to use your Mass attendance cards weekly. When attending Mass at Immaculate Conception, you may turn in a card to the priest or deacon after Mass. Do not turn it into an usher or place it in the collection basket. Make sure your child’s name and grade are on it. When attending Mass elsewhere, you may ask the priest or deacon to sign their parish bulletin and then add your child’s name and grade before turning it in at your child’s next class.

NEW YEAR'S MASSES - HOLY DAY
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31ST
 5:30 P.M. Vigil Mass

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1ST
 Stony Point
 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.
 Tomkins Cove – 7:30 a.m.

MONDAY DECEMBER 26TH
 Because of the Christmas weekend, there will be only 1 Mass celebrated on Monday, December 26th at 8:30 a.m.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

All those who are ill at home, in the hospital and in nursing homes, especially: Michael Costello, Lynn Westbrook, Michael Orapello, Ed & Ann Hanus, William & Geraldine Neary, Judy Stroup, Billy Keenan, Attracta Parks Pryor.

Our recently deceased: Anton Ljuljic.

We will announce at the Mass on Sunday for a period of one month the intentions of those who are sick and then we will print them for one month. After that we ask that you will please contact us to make sure that they are placed on the list again for another cycle. It is the only way we know if someone has recovered. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

- 8:30 Rose Brophy Jones (req. by Sylvestre Jones)
- 4:30 Kathleen Javenes (req. by family)
- 8:00 Kathleen Rogan (req. by family)
- 10:30 Michael Celenza Sr. (req. by family)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

- 7:30 Barbara Willett Walsh (req. by family)
- 9:30 ***For the People of the Parish***
- 11:30 Pat & Pete Quinn (req. by family)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26TH

- 8:30 Mary A. Costello (req. by family)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27TH

- 8:30 Dec'd Members of The Dolan & Keenan Family (req. by family)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28TH

- 7:30 Anna Marie Prunty (req. by family)
- 8:30 Carmen & Higinio (req. by family)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29TH

- 8:30 Alois & Kuni Amend (req. by family)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30TH

- 7:30 Lenore Kane (req. by family)
- 8:30 Dec'd Members of the Rosary Group (req. by The Rosary Group)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31ST

- 8:30 Tom & Betty Feeman (req. by family)

- 5:30 **Vigil** Mary A. Costello (req. by family)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1ST

- 7:30 ***For the People of the Parish***
- 9:30 James G. Faherty III (req. by The Petruzzi family)
- 11:30 Jim Cavanaugh (req. by family)

MIDNIGHT RUN

The Spirit of Christmas was brought to our brothers and sisters on the streets in Manhattan during our recent Breakfast Run. Special thank you's to the Stony Point Girl Scouts and Brownies for their wonderful gift packages and wrapped presents, to the Stony Point Boy Scouts for their generous donation of food and cookies and cake following their meeting on this past Saturday, to the Landry's for their help in cooking the breakfast on Sunday morning, to the Rodriguez family, to the Femia family and to all the volunteers who came on the run and brought the gift of fellowship and generosity to our friends. Having Santa with us brought a smile and some extra happiness to everyone there. A hot breakfast and lots of clothes and presents were given to a group of approximately 80 people.

The next run is a breakfast on February 12. Because of the large numbers of people we have been helping, there is a special need for men's clothes, especially sweat shirts and jeans or work pants. To donate, volunteer or participate in any way, please contact Deacon John or Jessica Sadowski 845 786 5759. Thanks again to everyone who made the Christmas breakfast run a huge success.

2017 MARCH FOR LIFE

On the 44th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, come to Washington, DC, and walk for the sake of the unborn. The March is on Friday, Jan. 27. A bus will leave from St. Francis of Assisi Church in West Nyack at 6 am. We will depart from Washington at 6 pm. Adults \$30, Students \$15. For reservations call 735-4379, 492-6709, or 425-1322 (para espanol). For more information, see our website RocklandRTL.org.

BAPTISM CLASS

The dates for the next Baptism Classes are: **January 27th and February 24th**. The Baptism dates are ordinarily the first and third Sunday of the Month.

BAPTISM

The dates for our next Baptisms are: **January 5th and January 19th**. We would ask you to please contact the rectory at (786-2742) before the date to make an appointment. We ask you to please attend the class a month prior to your child's Baptism in order to facilitate record keeping; and also to have, by the time the class is given, your child's Birth Certificate and Sponsor Certificates from the Parishes where the Sponsors themselves worship at the present time. We thank you for your help and cooperation and pray for the newborn children who will be Baptized in our Parish in these

coming months.

ATTENTION SNOW BIRDS

In order to put a temporary hold on the mailing of your offertory envelopes and to save postage, we would appreciate you calling the Parish Office if you plan to be away more than one month this coming winter season. This will also prevent mistakes in our record keeping because the post office returns your envelopes to us when you are away. Many times we are not sure if you have moved or just away temporarily. Please leave your name, ID number and the months you would like to have your envelopes stopped. **Information is needed by January 5th.**

NEWS OF INTEREST

Adoption - Baby girls and boys in China need homes. Infants and toddlers available. Call Barbara Salvesen at 623-5277.

Pro Life Mass - celebrated every 1st Monday night of the month at 7:30 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church 128 Parrott Road in West Nyack. The next Pro Life Mass will be on Monday, January 2nd.

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YOUR SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Collection December 18, 2016 was: \$8,794

Collection December 13, 2015 was: \$7,080

Please remember Immaculate Conception Church in your will.

