MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2019
5:00 pm --- Lewis & Rose Girgenti
Edward Windt (11th Ann.)
Richard Dzurenko
7:00 pm --- OLM Parishioners

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019
7:45 am --- For the Unborn
Kerri Knight
9:15 am --- Mary Ellen Smith
Leonard Dante
10:45 am --- Dennis McKenna
Graham Edwards
12:15 pm --- Bart Fitzsimmons
John Urban

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2019
9:30 am --- Mary Papso

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019
--- NO MORNING MASS
4:00 pm --- Jean Marie Dragos
Michael Murray
6:30 pm --- George & Lenore McKenzie
Paul Shence
10:00 pm - Richard Dzurenko
Dennis McKenna
George & Georgene Wyker

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2019
7:45 am --- Pedro & Angelita Tinsay
9:15 am --- Mellusi & Taverna Families
Lorraine Addeo
Ryan Family
10:45 am --- Dennis McKenna
Michael & Mary Ellen Dowd
12:15 pm Peter Hagan
Severina Cam
Erlina & deceased mem. of Ratcliffe family

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2019
9:30 am --- Heather Ryan
Dowd Family

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2019
9:30 am --- Ellen Barry

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2019
5:00 pm --- Hunter Henderson
Barbara DiStefano
7:00 pm --- Rudy & Rudilyn Ratcliffe
Bernard Cho

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019
7:45 am --- OLM Parishioners
9:15 am --- Anna Judge
10:45 am--- Robert Froetscher
Barbara DiStefano
12:15 pm --- Lorraine DiPietro
Raymond Kelley

SANCTUARY LAMP
In memory of John Turick

SUNDAY OFFERING
December 14-15
Immaculate Conception $ 435.00
Flowers $ 445.00
Retirement Religious $2,934.00
Total $11,350.00

Faith Direct Donations in November 2019 were: $9,836.00
Grocery Gift Card Sales for 2019: $71,985.00  Profit: $3,594.75

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!!
Reminder: If you attend Mass at either St. Luke’s or St. Mark’s you can drop your Our Lady of the Mountain envelope in the collection basket and it will be credited as your donation to Our Lady of the Mountain.

FAITH DIRECT
During Advent we prepare our minds and hearts for the real meaning of Christmas, the birth of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. As we reflect on the upcoming Christmas season, it is likely that we will be busy with parties and family gatherings. Perhaps even a trip out of town to visit friends. With all of those joyous celebrations, we might miss Mass. That’s where eGiving with Faith Direct can help simplify your life. By supporting Our Lady of the Mountain, both you and our parish can save some time and peace of mind this holiday season. Signing up is easy! Visit faith.direct/NJ568, or text the word ENROLL to (Text Phone Number). Already using Faith Direct? Log in to add your Christmas or End-of-Year contributions to your account, or text a dollar amount to (Text Phone Number) to make a one-time gift today! Thank you for your continued support of our parish family. God Bless You,
Fr. Marcin

MINISTRIES
Altar Servers  Fr. Javier  876-4395
Baptism Preparation Fr. Marcin  876-4395
Children’s Liturgy Debi Pinelli  813-1982
Columbiettes Joanne Lee 973-699-6793
Eucharistic Ministers Cindy Jones 684-0661
Evangelization Renny Hodgskin  876-4395
Food Pantry Director Traci Geraghty  876-4003
Gift Shop Fr. Clary  852-5779
Knights of Columbus John Clary  852-5779
Lectors Chris Latran  852-9341
Music/Choir Director Rita Mueller  973-862-2095
R.C.I.A. Fr. Marcin  876-4395
Rosary Altar Society Carol Petronella 732-794-8382
Sacristan Linda Richartz 876-4395
Visiting Ministry Deacon Bob Head 684-8399
Weddings Kim Smith  876-4395
Local Youth Protection / Safe Environment Coordinator Kim Smith
FROM THE DESK OF FR. MARCIN

MY DEAR PARISHIONERS,

Christmas is almost here. Are you happy?? In our gathering to celebrate Sunday, the Lord’s Day, we come to the final days of Advent and mark its Fourth Sunday. The Advent Wreath is ablaze with light signaling the closeness of the Solemnity of Our Lord’s Holy Nativity. Do you recognize the indwelling presence of the Lord Jesus in your life?

We are all busy preparing for Christmas. A lot of preparation had to be made for the first Christmas also by Mary and Joseph. They had to prepare by saying “YES” to God’s plan for the birth of Jesus. Today our Gospel focuses on the preparation made by Joseph for that first Christmas.

What gave Joseph the strength to endure all the trials his vocation brought him? It was obviously his life of prayer that gave him the strength to be obedient to God’s call to him. He was a just man, a man of honor as our Gospel today tells us. He had to have been a man of deep faith to fulfill his high calling. There is no record of him being present on Calvary so we presume he had died before Jesus. We can presume that this man of faith had Jesus and Mary present with him as he died. That is the way that all people of faith would like to die, in the company of Jesus and Mary.

In 1870 Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph Patron of the Universal Church. He said, “In the same way that he once kept unceasing holy watch over the family of Nazareth, so now does he protect and defend with his heavenly patronage the Church of Christ.”

St. Joseph is Patron of the Church. He had to make preparations for the first Christmas, to submit to God’s plan in faith. As we prepare for Christmas we can turn to Joseph asking his help so that we can prepare our hearts in faith to be worthy mangers to receive Jesus.

There are many things these days trying to discourage Catholics from attending Christmas Mass and regular participation in worship. Believers must be strong and courageous in offering witness that the Church is our Mother, purchased by the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the door to eternal life.

I am asking you to assist me in extending an invitation to your family, neighbors and friends to join us at Our Lady of the Mountain for the celebration of Our Lord’s Birth by coming to Mass. Your presence and prayers will help strengthen us to fight against the evil forces which are among us and trying to destroy us.

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

God gave us the greatest gift of all that first Christmas, his Son Jesus. Jesus waits for you to give him a gift in return, the gift of your heart, the gift of you making room in the inn of your heart for him not just at Christmas or Easter but every day, and especially to worship him at Mass every Sunday. Jesus has done everything for you, can you do something for Jesus? Open your heart to Jesus.

“Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace”. Baby Jesus, help us to be people of peace and to spread peace everywhere we go.

I look forward to seeing you all in church again for Christmas. Please do not forget, invite someone with you for Holy Mass. It may change their life!

Parish staff, priests and all employees of Our Lady of the Mountain Church wish you all the best. May the peace and Joy of Christ be with you this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Peace and joy of our Lord Jesus be with all of you!
The Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of Jesus, our patron – pray for us...
Merry Christmas!!! Do not be afraid to say it...MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

After Christmas we will not distribute the Precious Blood at all masses for winter season. Distribution of the Precious Blood will come back on Holy Thursday (it is a beautiful day to be able to receive Holy Communion under two forms). It is winter time and flu season, and during this time some people get sick and to protect the health of our parishioners I made this pastoral decision for the good of the parish and our good parishioners. When we receive the Bread of Life we still receive the whole Jesus his Body and Blood. It is nothing new! The same was last year and two years ago.

MASS SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS

Holy Masses OLM:
Christmas Eve: 4PM, 6:30PM, 10PM
Christmas Day: 7:45AM, 9:15AM, 10:45AM, 12:15PM

Holy Masses St. Mark:
Christmas Eve: 4:30PM, 6:30PM, 10PM
Christmas Day: 9AM, 11AM
CHRISTMAS TREES

This year as we prepared for the Christmas Holiday Season we found the need to have to purchase new trees for the church. If anyone would like to make a donation in memory or in honor of someone toward the trees please see Fr. Marcin. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

FROM FR. JAVIER

TEACHING FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH
The Sacrament of Holy Orders
The Three Degrees of the Sacrament of Holy Orders
3. The ordination of deacons - "in order to serve"

My dear brothers and sisters, according to our tradition and the catechism of the Catholic Church at a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands “not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry”. At an ordination to the diaconate only the bishop lays hands on the candidate, thus signifying the deacon’s special attachment to the bishop in the tasks of his diaconate. Also, deacons share in Christ's mission and grace in a special way. The sacrament of Holy Orders marks them with an imprint "character" which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the "deacon" or servant of all. Among other tasks, it is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity.

Since the Second Vatican Council the Latin Church has restored the diaconate "as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy," while the Churches of the East had always maintained it. This permanent diaconate, which can be conferred on married men, constitutes an important enrichment for the Church's mission. Indeed it is appropriate and useful that men who carry out a truly diaconal ministry in the Church, whether in its liturgical and pastoral life or whether in its social and charitable works, should "be strengthened by the imposition of hands which has come down from the apostles. They would be more closely bound to the altar and their ministry would be made more fruitful through the sacramental grace of the diaconate.”

God bless you.

Volunteer Opportunities with the Sisters of Christian Charity

I was elderly and you listened to me...I was unable to read and you read to me...I was unable to walk and you took me outside in the sunshine in my wheelchair.

Do any of those activities attract you? Join the Sisters and the staff at Mallinckrodt Convent in Mendham as a volunteer and become a part of the team that services our older religious. Any of your gifts can be used to help make life enjoyable for our Sisters. Any time you can give will be helpful. Weekends are especially good times to be with our Sisters. If you are interested, contact Sister Joanne Bednar at 973-224-3545 or by e-mail at sisterjoannebednar@yahoo.com.

Let the year 2020 be the year you begin doing the volunteering you had always dreamed of doing.

Religious Education

Grade K - 6 --- NO CLASSES December 22 & 29
Grade 7 ------ Monday, January 6th------ 6:00 - 7:15 pm
Grade 8 ------ Monday, January 13th------ 6:00 - 7:15 pm
Grade 9 ------ Monday, January 6th------ 7:30 - 9:00 pm
Grade 10----- Monday, January 13th----- 7:30 - 9:00 pm

High School Youth Group
Grades 9 to 12
Wednesdays, 7:30 - 9:00 pm
(Teen Center)

WHY WE ARE CATHOLIC

We are Catholic because we believe:

Jesus means in Hebrew: "God saves." At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, "will save his people from their sins". In Jesus, God recapitulates all of his history of salvation on behalf of men. The Catechism of the Catholic Church 430

IMPORTANT

A growing number of parishes are reporting that they, their parishioners, and parish staff have been receiving a request to buy gift cards for their pastor and get them to a particular address. If you get such an email, you can be rather sure that this is a scam. Our priests do not ask parishioners to buy gift cards for them. Please be vigilant!!

CHRISTMAS FLOWER ENVELOPES

There are envelopes on the ushers table at all of the doors of the church if you would like to remember a loved one with a flower donation. They will be listed in the bulletin after Christmas. Thank you
COAT DRIVE?
Have an extra coat hanging in the closet? The High School Youth Ministry is collecting new and gently used coats (all ages & sizes!) for the Father English Center. Hats, scarves, gloves, and all winter outer wear is also needed. Drop off in the bins in Gathering Room Saturday, December 28th thru Sunday, January 5th. Any questions, please call the H.S. Youth Ministry office at 908-876-5024.

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE
Thank you so very much for all of the gifts bought and given to our annual giving tree recipients! The excitement on the faces of those who hearts you have touched is wonderful. This year we again served our local community, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Warren County and Straight and Narrow Drug Rehab for our diocese. Your kindness is so greatly appreciated.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA
Special thanks to Mike Lennon and his committee for the beautiful ceremony held on Saturday, December 14th, to honor all of our local veterans. Our cemetery has many veterans that were presented with a wreath that was purchased by our local families in honor of their service to our country. Thank you again to Mike and everyone who participated in any way to honor our deceased veterans. God Bless America.

The Knights are sponsoring a bus to the March for Life in Washington DC on January 24, 2020. To reserve a seat or more info, email mike.lennon@comcast.net

Reflection for the Week
I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.
John 6:35

We are an active council and have a lot to offer - Become a Knight!
www.lvkofc.org

We are currently praying for the sick from the pulpit for one month then adding their names to this list in the bulletin. If there is someone’s name listed that has passed away please contact the office and let us know. Thank you.

The St. Luke Catholic Preschool is currently accepting registrations for the 2020-2021 school year. This is how families describe the St. Luke preschool program:
“Impressive”
“Outstanding”
“Highly Recommended”
“Well Rounded”

Call to make an appointment to visit our school at 908-876-3515, Ext. 41.

Come and see for yourself how we can give your child an excellent start on a successful school career!
Forms are located in the Gathering Place and can also be accessed on the St. Luke website at www.stlukeparishlv.com

Upon Registration, a $50 non-refundable check is required to Reserve your child’s enrollment.
If you have any questions, please e-mail us at preschool@stlukelv.org

5 REASONS TO COME HOME (CHURCH)

WHY COME HOME???

5. WE HUNGER FOR MEANING AND PURPOSE IN OUR LIVES.
We all want answers to why we are here and what we were made for. The Catholic Church has the answer. God made us to know, love, and serve Him in this world, so we can be with Him forever in heaven. The Catholic Church helps us to fulfill this purpose that God has for all of us. And when we live out God’s will for us, we find extreme joy and peace in life.

4. WE NEED GOD’S FORGIVENESS AND HEALING FOR OUR FAILINGS AND GOD’S MERCY TO HELP US BECOME BETTER PEOPLE.
Perhaps you’ve been carrying around deep spiritual wounds or painful sins that have burdened you for years. The Catholic Church gives us a way to bring our faults, failings, and hurts before God in the Sacrament of Confession, so He can take the yoke off our shoulders and bring us healing and peace, giving us a “new start” every time we need it.

3. OUR FAMILIES NEED TO BE BUILT ON A STRONG FOUNDATION OF FAITH AND WE NEED TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS.
You may have heard the phrase “a family that prays together stays together.” It is true! Many studies—and experience—have shown that families who live out their faith together are stronger and happier. If you want to give your children the greatest treasure in the world, give them the gift of faith. The Church also provides us with a community of faith-filled friends in which we can find support and strength for our life’s journey.

2. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS THE SACRAMENTS—AND US ESPECIALLY LONG FOR THE EUCHARIST.
It is in the Catholic Church that you experience the fullness of the seven sacraments, which Christ bestows on His Church to help fill us with grace to draw us closer to God. As Catholics, we have the ultimate privilege of receiving Christ in the most personal way possible—in the Holy Eucharist. Countless Catholics have returned to or entered the Church because of their longing for Jesus in the Eucharist. He longs to feed us with Himself!

1. CATHOLICISM IS TRUE!
The only really good reason to believe something is because it is true, and Catholicism is true! The Catholic Church is the one Church established by Christ 2,000 years ago (Matt 16:18). It is the Church to which God calls all of His universal family to belong. The Catholic Church offers us deep union with Christ through the Scripture, Sacraments, prayer, and community.

5 REASONS WE NEED TO CELEBRATE MASS ON SUNDAY — EVERY WEEK

1) Sunday Mass fulfills God’s law. The Third Commandment is, “Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day” (Exodus 20:8; see also Deuteronomy 5:12). The Christian Sabbath is Sunday, and Catholics keep the Sabbath holy by fulfilling the obligation to attend Mass (Canons 1246-1248; Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2174-2178). The commandment is not a suggestion or a request; it is a command or an order. The law makes compulsory what we should want to do on our own.

2) Weekly worship follows Jesus’ example. Jesus was in the habit of going to the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke 4:16b). His mother Mary was “full of grace” (Luke 1:28) and his stepfather Joseph was “a righteous man” (Matthew 1:19) and they both carefully “fulfilled all of the prescriptions of the law” (Luke 2:39), which means that they went to the synagogue every Sabbath. Not only did they observe this law themselves, they took their son with them, and when Jesus was old enough he went on his own. If Jesus observed the Sabbath at the synagogue every week, we should observe the Sabbath and go to Mass every week.

3) Sunday is a day of thanksgiving. Eucharist means thanks. It is right and just to give thanks to the Lord our God, and the Mass is the best prayer to offer thanks. God graciously blesses us with everything that we have: life and health, food and shelter, family and friends, intellect and talents, opportunity and resources — and faith. These gifts are so awesome that we ought to be overflowing with gratitude and eager to give our thanks and praise. The ideal is to give thanks every day. Weekly thanksgiving is a bare minimum. If we give thanks only intermittently or rarely, we fail to adequately honor the giver of the gifts.

4) Community prayer is essential. From the beginning of the church, the community “devoted themselves . . . to the breaking of the bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Christians pray together by nature, and the Mass is the premier form of communal prayer. Some make the unfortunate claim: “I can pray by myself and I do not need to go to church.” Usually the more negligent a person becomes with their Mass attendance, the more negligent the person becomes with their private prayer. There are two pillars to a well-rounded prayer life, communal and private, and to do one or the other exclusively is to be imbalanced. The more a person prays privately, the more the person should want to worship with the community, and the more a person worships with the community, the more a person should want to pray privately.

5) Weekly Eucharist is solid spiritual food. Most people are health-conscious. It is important to eat properly every day to avoid hunger pangs, weakness, malnutrition and disease. It is the same with our spiritual life. We need to be spiritual-food conscious if we wish to avoid emptiness, spiritual weakness, vulnerability to temptation and sickness due to sin. The Mass begins with the Liturgy of the Word. God told the prophet Ezekiel, “Eat what is before you; eat this scroll” (Ezekiel 3:1). God wanted him to devour his word, and God wants us to do the same. Peter accurately observed, “Master, you have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). The second half of the Mass is the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Jesus declared, “My flesh is real food, and my blood true drink” (John 6:55). Spiritual malnutrition begins when we go without Word and Sacrament longer than a week.

SUNDAY MASS

- Sunday Mass is not a show on stage; it is worship, prayer before an altar.
- Sunday Mass attendance does not depend on the priest, musicians or ushers.
  We dare not allow any person to stand in the way of our worship of God.
- Sunday Mass outranks sports tournaments, team travel and athletic practices.
  There are many Mass times available.
- Sunday Mass is not what we get out of it, but what we give. The more we put into prayer, the more we get out of it.

  Sunday Mass takes just one hour out of the 168 hours in a week.