

JMJ

Dear Parishioners,

Since it will be twenty years this month that my own sister died, I thought I would share this powerful editorial by Gayle Somers that was in the Wall Street Journal. The pain parents go through, loosing a child is unfathomable and the opioid addiction as well as increased suicide among high schoolers should have all of us worried, Our Lady of Sorrows pray for us.

During my first pregnancy, my husband decided to build a cradle. It was the old-fashioned kind; it looked like a long box set on rockers. It was simple and cozy. When our daughter was born, we tucked her into it and kept it in motion with the tip of a foot. She outgrew the cradle within three months, but it was the place where she enjoyed the sweet, innocent sleep of infancy. We stored it for future use.

The future came four years later when our son was born. At 9 pounds and 23 inches, he was a considerable presence within the cradle’s narrow walls. He was beautiful, a dumpling of a baby, and a good sleeper. It had taken me longer than I’d hoped to get pregnant again, so I loved watching him sleep, drinking in his little body from head to toe.

Plain light wooden coffin in a crematorium. Flash forward 33 years. Another day arrived when I stood next to a long box, another resting place for my son. This time it was his coffin. I had never considered the similarities a swaddled baby sleeps the same way a dead man does, with his arms folded across his chest. Not many parents, thank God, see a child lie in both his cradle and his coffin.

My son died of an accidental drug overdose cocaine laced, unknown to him, with fentanyl. That dumpling baby had grown into the dearest of boys sweet, tenderhearted, with a gifted intellect. We were beyond proud to have a son like him, in addition to our two daughters one older, one younger.

As a teenager he got entangled in drugs, and for 14 years he fought, often valiantly, to break free of his demons. Those years were full of pain and suffering for him and for us. And just when we thought he had triumphed over a cycle of rehabs and relapses just as he was re-entering our family life, redeeming his relationship with his sisters and their families darkness closed in again. Fentanyl blew out his insides; he died on the spot.

Years ago, when I’d gazed on him as he slept in his cradle, I was full of the joy and dreams that fill every mother’s head and heart. My husband and I had no way of knowing how much suffering our son would put us through. These days pregnant women can take prenatal tests to learn about genetic defects their babies may have. Sometimes I’m grateful that no test allows you to see how a child’s life will unfold. All parents instinctively shrink from the excruciating expectation of a child suffering and, inevitably, their own suffering.

Some parents are so frightened at the prospect of raising a child with a genetic abnormality that they end the child’s life in the womb. While I understand this temptation to spare the child the struggle, to spare yourself the pain reflecting on the time I spent with my son convinced me that life is worth it despite the suffering.

Years ago, as I tipped that cradle with my foot to keep him asleep, I felt the power of unconditional love. By the time I stroked his hair and face for the last time, half-hoping that my touch would somehow awaken him, I knew that my love had grown stronger as a result of our struggle. I finally understood that the love parents feel for their newborns is a beginning, not an end.

Sometimes children, either in childhood or as adults, experience extreme suffering perhaps from disease or disability, perhaps from their own choices or the actions of others. I have known parents who gave birth to apparently healthy babies and watched them, in the course of things, suffer. They developed muscular dystrophy, autism, leukemia, a life-ending brain infection, schizophrenia. They died by suicide or became addicted to drugs.

None of these parents have ever regretted the birth of their children. Even knowing what we know now about how our children’s lives would end, all of us would choose life, no matter how short, no matter how painful. We welcomed our children into our families. We gave them names, and then, one day, we began to learn how to do what all parents must do love without limits, comfort during the pain, not shrink from the suffering, give thanks for the gifts our children are to us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Father Newcomb

Liturgical Ministers for January 26/27, 2019

MASS	LECTOR	MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION	ALTAR SERVERS
4:00PM	D. LEGATO	W. PONDS, K. BOBISH	J. LEGATO, S. BHIKARRY
8:30AM	M. LATINI	W. CARMODY, J. HENDRICK, D. LIVINGSTON	A. AND E. TRUJILLO
11:30AM	M. ESLING	N. SMITH, H. MARINARO	DJ PERRIN, I. AND S. CUELLO

Court Madonna No. #114's Annual Tricky Tray is TODAY! January 20th. Doors open at Noon and drawing begins at 2PM. Tickets are 25 for \$1! No admission Fee! Contact: Barbara Drew 856-2624. All proceeds to benefit Community Charities.

The next *All You Can Eat Breakfast* will be on Sunday, January 27th. Bring a friend.

Take advantage of access to *Formed* for another year! You can create your own account **FREE** of charge at: stmarysportjervis.formed

You can sign up with your own email and password to gain access to multiple programs, movies, ebooks, and audios.

UNWINE and PAINT: St. Mary's Little Lambs is hosting a Sip and Paint Party on Fri., Feb. 1 from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. in the Most Sacred Heart Hall. The cost of \$35.00 per person includes step by step instructions by an artist from Le Jardin Decorative Arts, canvas and paints for creating a beautiful one-of-a-kind work of art. Snacks will be provided, and each participant will receive 2 glasses of wine, beer, or soda. (Must be 21 to drink alcoholic beverages). Water will also be available. Reservations and payments are due by Jan. 25th. Message us on Facebook or call 845 858-4208. Please make checks payable to St. Mary's Little Lambs. The doors will open at 6:00 p.m. Check our facebook page in case of changes to the program due to inclement weather.

Open House at St. Mary's Little Lambs-In celebration of Catholic School Week, St. Mary's Little Lambs Early Childhood Learning Center invites current, prospective, and alumni families to attend an Open House on Monday, January 28 from 5-7pm. Snow date is Monday February 4. Visit classrooms, meet with staff, and learn how Little Lambs is raising standards in Catholic education. Little Lambs will begin accepting registrations for the 2019-20 school year at the Open House. Parents attending the Open House will have the opportunity to enter a free drawing for a \$500.00 scholarship to be used towards tuition payment. For more information, contact director Eileen Carmody at 845-858-4208 or littlelambs@stmarysportjervis.com. To stay up to date on our news and events, visit our Facebook page. St. Mary's Little Lambs is a New York State licensed center, located at 44 Ball Street in Port Jervis.

Boy Scout Sunday is Feb. 3rd and will be acknowledged at the 8:30am Mass. They will be selling Chili \$8/Qt. after all Masses.



Join us on Sunday, February 10th from 1pm to 4pm to celebrate *family*. There will be crafts, games, snacks and ice cream! **ALL FREE!**

Please contact Rose at 845-856-8602 or

Gina at 917-733-4307 if you plan on attending **BEFORE** January 28th. *Sponsored by the Catholic Daughters Court # 114.*

ANNOUNCED MASSES

- Monday, January 21 (Agnes, virgin and martyr)**
9:00am Violeta Smadbeck and Anne Morey,
by Dr. Jane Brooks
- Tuesday, January 22**
9:00am Joan Ann Wilcox, by Dick and Barbara
Drew
- Wednesday, January 23 (Vincent, deacon and martyr; Marianne Cope, virgin)**
9:00am Violeta Smadbeck, by Dr. Jane Brooks
- Thursday, January 24 (Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church)**
9:00am Elizabeth Joan Newcomb
- Saturday, January 26**
4:00pm The parishioners of St. Mary's
- Sunday, January 27**
8:30am Joseph Portella, by Walt and Eileen
Carmody
11:30am Rosalia Altadonna, by Erika Cox and fam.
1:00pm Margaret and James Fortunato, by
Rosemary and Paul Brislin



The Sanctuary Lamp will burn brightly this week in the church in memory of Stephen Westfall, by Catherine Westfall and family.

Please Pray For the Sick: Angela Portella, Walter Szpakowicz, Elizabeth Brennan, Michael Medaglia, Jackie Mundy, Barbara Straub, Tress Loughrey, Sal Careri, Elizabeth Startup Jones, Louis Harford, William Lincoln, Jeanine Lincoln, Michael Barnes, Donald Wolff, Ramonita Irizarry, Debi Cotugno, Theresa Fuller, Maureen Hildebrandt, Charles Hildebrandt, Aedan Roach, James Roach, Robin Radzikowski, Helen Andreano, Tito Rivera, Neil Stasilli, Josefina Rodriguez, Joseph Hinkley, Toni Sorrentino, Frances Brennan, Andrea Fedoruk, Susan Upton, Chris Marion III, Loretta Olenick, Layla Grace Foster, Roderick T. Esling, James Lincoln, Danielle Devore, Wayne DeMarco, Marge O'Connor, Mindy Walsh, Arieal Walsh, Raquel Maldonado, Tyrell Davis, Eppie Harford, Christine Nowak, Jesivel Abreu, Stacie Holman, Cody Bain, Robert Cinerar, Dominic Loffredo, and Steven Gaesser.

The search has begun for the longest married couple in the Archdiocese of New York. To enter couples must be sacramentally married for a minimum of 65 years and reside in the Archdiocese of New York.

To register, please call the parish office. The deadline is Thursday, January 24, 2019.

The collection for January 12/13 was \$5,145.
Thank you for your continued generosity.