

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES OF
ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

REVEREND JEREMIAH N. MURASSO, PH.D., ED.D., PSY.D., PASTOR
REVEREND PATRICK KANE, PAROCHIAL VICAR
REVEREND THOMAS KELLY, PAROCHIAL VICAR



THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. - Mt 2:10-11a

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

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**Epiphany of the Lord
January 8, 2023**

Mass Intentions for the Week

SATURDAY, January 7 - Vigil – Epiphany of the Lord

4:00pm OLOP + Frank Hammell
by Wife, Gail

4:30pm SVDP + Mark Locono Rotondo
by Joncas Family

SUNDAY, January 8 – Epiphany of the Lord

8:00am OLOP + Filomena Lavorgna
by Husband, Attilio

9:00am ST. B Mark & Lisa Petrosimone
by Jeffrey

10:00am OLOP + Robert Scussel, Jr.
by Scussel Family

11:15am SVDP + Dean Capobianco (Birthday)
by Family

MONDAY, January 9 - Baptism of the Lord

8:00am OLOP Healing for Jennifer
by Vittorio Family

8:00am SVDP + Robert McLoughlin, Jr. (50th Birthday)
by Family

TUESDAY, January 10 – Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Marge & Harold Hall, Jr.
by Marianne Hall

8:00am SVDP + Laura Anderson

WEDNESDAY, January 11 - Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Anthony Mauro
by Porto Funeral Home

8:00am SVDP + Michael Bucci
by Family

THURSDAY, January 12 - Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Mackenzie Barrett (Birthday)
by Alyce Richmond

8:00am ST. B + Catherine Caruso
by Niece, Catherine

FRIDAY, January 13 - St. Hilary

8:00am ST. B + Joyce Hutt

SATURDAY, January 14 - Vigil – 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

4:00pm OLOP + Rose Izzo
by Daughter, Dottie

4:30pm SVDP + Marie DelSanto
by Sister, Catherine

SUNDAY, January 15 – 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00am OLOP + Eleanor D'Esopo (Remembrance)

9:00am ST. B + Constance 'Connie' Pietrosimone
by Jeffrey

10:00am OLOP + Maria Lukac
by Daughter, Helen Nguyen

11:15am SVDP + Giuseppe Montuori & Michelina Venditti
by Family

STEWARDSHIP

Regular Collection - 12/18 \$9,843.00

Solemnity of Mary Collection \$4,144.00

Online Giving \$687.00

January 14 & January 15 Second Collection:
Utility

Thank you to the many of you who have been so
generous and responsive in these difficult times.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sunday: Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13/Eph
3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12

Monday: Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Acts 10:34-38/Ps 29:1-
2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 (11b)/Mt 3:13-17

Tuesday: Heb 2:5-12/Ps 8:2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9/Mk 1:21-
28

Wednesday: Heb 2:14-18/Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9/Mk
1:29-39

Thursday: Heb 3:7-14/Ps 95:6-7c, 8-9, 10-11/Mk 1:40-
45

Friday: Heb 4:1-5, 11/Ps 78:3 and 4bc, 6c-7, 8/Mk
2:1-12

Saturday: Heb 4:12-16/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15/Mk 2:13-17

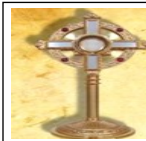
CONFESSION SCHEDULE:

Our Lady of Pompeii: Saturday at 3:00-3:30pm

St. Vincent de Paul: Saturday at 3:30-4:00pm

SILENCE.

Please, be mindful that many parishioners arrive early prior to the start of Mass in order to sit reflectively with the LORD in prayer. Please, be mindful of the level of your voice and that voices carry from the back of the church to the front. Please, maintain a subdued tone when speaking so that other's quiet time is not disturbed.



Holy Hour
Come spend time in
the presence of Jesus.

Every Monday, immediately following morning Mass at Our Lady of Pompeii, there is one hour of **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**. This *Holy Hour* is also streamed for those who cannot join us. Go to <https://www.stpioofpietrelcinaeh.com>

St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish

Address: 355 Foxon Road, East Haven, CT 06513

Phone Number: (203) 469-0764

Office Hours:

Foxon Road: Mon-Fri 8:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:00

Taylor Avenue: Mon. & Fri. 10:00-2:00

E-Mail: stpioofpietrelcina@gmail.com

MINISTRY & EVENT CALENDAR

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 No Events or Activities Scheduled	SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 No Events or Activities Scheduled
MONDAY, JANUARY 9 Holy Hour - 8:30-9:30am in Our Lady of Pompeii Church Bible Study - 7:00pm on Zoom Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823 Midnight Run - 7:00pm Contact Sue Stacey at 203-214-1762	MONDAY, JANUARY 16 Holy Hour - 8:30-9:30am in Our Lady of Pompeii Church Bible Study - 7:00pm on Zoom Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8	TUESDAY, JANUARY 17 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11 Bible Study - 6:30pm at SVDP Parish Office Contact Marie Connors at 203-468-1184 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8	WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18 Bible Study - 6:30pm at SVDP Parish Office Contact Marie Connors at 203-468-1184 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8
THURSDAY, JANUARY 12 Scriptural Rosary - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8	THURSDAY, JANUARY 19 Scriptural Rosary - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8
FRIDAY, JANUARY 13 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8	FRIDAY, JANUARY 20 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8
SATURDAY, JANUARY 14 No Events or Activities Scheduled	SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 No Events or Activities Scheduled



**FROM THE PEN FR.
MURASSO
GIFT CARDS NEEDED**

As the food prices continue to rise and the holiday season upon us, several of our parishioners are having trouble buying food as they struggle to purchase other household necessities.

Grocery Shopping cards in any denomination to any of the local supermarkets would help me help members of our parish family who presently are in need of assistance for the purchase of food. These gift/shopping cards can be dropped into the collection basket or brought to the parish office. Whatever you can do, is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance. JNM



Inclement Weather

As we approach the winter months ahead, we know how quickly our New England weather can change. The cancellation of morning Mass will be on Channel 8 news. Look to the bottom of your screen under "closings" and look for *St. Pio of Pietrelcina*.

The Candles burn this week for these special intentions:

Our Lady of Pompeii Candles

Sanctuary Lamp (Right Side) ~ In Memory of Billy Richmond & For All the Souls in Purgatory

Sanctuary Lamp (Left Side) ~ In Memory of the Mauro & Elko Families

Chapel ~

Sacred Heart of Jesus ~

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Icon ~

Our Lady of Pompeii Picture ~

St. Vincent de Paul Candles

Sanctuary Lamp (Right Side) ~ In Memory of the Balzano & Avitable Families

Sanctuary Lamp (Left Side) - In Memory of Ronald Paolillo

Our Lady's Altar ~

St. Joseph's Altar ~

St. Bernadette Candles

Sanctuary Lamp (Right Side) ~

Sanctuary Lamp (Left Side) ~

PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISH

Nick Vessicchio, Sally Ann Fallon, Lynette Ely, David T. Boyle, Richard Lucibello, Carmel Ferretti, Bryan Surprenant, Sharon Spadacenta, Marie & Charles Zambrano, Helen Langello, Brian Savo, Gerry Andrea, Alan Poirier, Connie Rasimas, Jane Pyka, Harry Clark, Lou DiNola, Geraldine Licciardi, Joanne Cretella, Joseph Anyzeski, Fran Sofo, Elizabeth Kuen, Deborah Sanning, Paula Ferrara, Tina Marie Fionia, Joseph Parise, Frank DelGrego, Moira Ferguson, Danielle Joubert, Frances Polaski, Pauline Condon, Rose Anna Izzo, Angelo DeMatteo, Patricia Aulenti, Michael Pascale, Alyce Richmond, Catherine Leach, Mark Schettino, Patty DiMilo, Rose Rogalski, Elaine Smith, Karen Rescigno, Virginia Pisano, DJ DiVincenzo, Sgt. Anthony Rybaruk, Philip & Sally DeMilo, Anna Concelmo, Anna Marie Nappi, Brian Higney, Rich Tortora, Denise Bailey, Joseph Peterson, Marion Mahl, Paula Ruddock, Pamela Willis, Laura Luzzi, Brian Wilson, Maureen Redmond, Kristianne Argentino, Shirley Perrelli, Bill Izzo, Andrew & Catherine Criscuolo, Patricia Miles, Joe Coscia, Deborah Verab, Dona Marie, Louis Messina, Christina Meoli, Michelle Smith, Ron Mattei, Angela Riccio, Charlene Tantalio, Al Forgione, Gabriella Garrity, Beverly Fucci, W.D. Merkle, Phyllis Anastasio, Cheryl Barbara, Carmine DelBasso, Laura-Phyllis Esposito, Diana Vitelli O'Brien, Meghan Keeney, Gennaro Milone, Jo Vuolo, Felicia DeRoche, Marilyn Kozin, Mike Barnett, Richard Costanzo, Carole & Frank Casapulla, Gerrie Amendola, Michael Bowen, Linda Montone, Mary Diamante, Carol Esposito, Fred & Barbara Brow, Christopher Farrell, Roberta Sanders-Gray, Jeannette Winston, Marilyn Sisson, Ryder Feeley, Theodore Siwinski, Michael Enders, Nicholas Cerillo, Edwina Cinque, John Soleski, Rudolph Pohlman, Linda Esposito, Renee Flynn, The Cooper Family, Rosemary Riccitelli, Marie Riccitelli, Lynn Ely, Ethan Roche, Frances Graney, Barbara Kapusta, Megan Maturo, Rose Paula Dziedulonis, Roma Criscuolo, Lucille Ready, Taras Mychajlowskyj, Denise Steiner, Mary Ann Anastasio, Guy Brasile, Gloribeth R., Stacie Bouchard, Daija Diaz, Al Sappinetti, Guy Racino, Michael Polaski, Martha Catel, Eddie Villecco, Isaiah Colville, Marie Monico, Jennie Nazario, Joan Proto, Caitlin Rustic, Michael Filion, Joanne Gondek, John Torello, Mauro Antonio Bezanilla, Matteo Criscuolo, Robert Filion, Lucy Carbone, Dorene Izzo, Lucille Palange, Carmine Riccitelli, Sr., Louise Amato, Mark Houston, Avery Bye, Mark Palmisano, Alex Bernaitis, Vincent Pisano, Charles Scalesse, Ann Hamilton, Kristin Vollero, Camilla Palmieri

Please send prayer requests to stpiofpietrelcina@gmail.com so that our parishioners and friends can be remembered in our prayers.

**Midnight Run
Taylor Avenue Campus**

The Midnight Run for **January** is the **2nd Monday**, which is **January 9th**. Donations of brown bag lunches, water, juice boxes and toiletries are appreciated. These donations can be dropped off to Sue Stacey's home, 82 Forbes Place, up until 7pm on **Monday, January 9th**. Thank you and God bless you for all donations. Stay safe & well.

**Midnight Run
Foxon Road Campus**

On the last Monday of each month, we bring 75 bagged lunches to the Columbus House Overflow Shelter.

Donations Needed:

ShopRite Gift Cards or

Gallon Size Ziploc Bags

Quart Size Ziploc Bags

Peanut Butter & Jelly

Juice Pouches

Raisin Boxes

Fruit Cups & Pudding Cups

Granola Bars

Individual Packaged Cookies, Crackers or Chips

We are also looking for small amounts or full skeins of yarn, it will be used to make hats and scarves for the midnight run. Please leave your donations at any entrance of the church. Thank you.

Midnight Run is the **LAST** Monday of **EVERY** month from Our Lady of Pompeii Church from 6-7 pm. Thank-you for being so generous!



St. Bernadette Food Pantry located at the East Shore Senior Center is open every Saturday from 10:00am-11:00am. We are always in need of non-perishable foods. Top choices are, canned: tomatoes, tomato sauce, vegetables, tuna fish, soups and fruits. Pasta, mac & cheese and peanut butter. Consumption guidelines provided to us from the CT

Food Bank: Expiration/Code Date Extensions past expiration: high acid foods (i.e. tomatoes) 12-18 months. Low acid foods (canned meat, most vegetables) 2-5 years. Food in jars, 12 months past expiration, dry cereal 6-12 months, rice/pasta (dry) 1 year. Questions, please contact Deb or Rico at 203-468-7489



THE EAST HAVEN FOOD PANTRY is asking for pasta, cereal and peanut butter the month of January. Please leave your donations of food at the church entrances.

*Starting October 1, the Food Pantry will be open from 9:00am-11:00am on Saturdays & Tuesdays.

The Food Pantry is looking for volunteers to make deliveries to our homebound residents on Tuesday's mornings. Please call 203-467-4668 if interested.

For more info call Christine Sandford 203-469-7823

From the Pen of Fr. M.

Reverend Jeremiah N. Murasso, Ph.D., Ed.D., Psy.D.

The Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12



Traditionally, the second Sunday after Christmas, the Church celebrates the feast of the Epiphany. It is God *REVEALING* His Son to the world as *Light*. The second Sunday after Christmas this year falls on January 8. Also, this year, the feast of the Holy Family: Jesus, Mary and Joseph was celebrated this past Friday on December 30 while the feast of the *Solemnity of the Mary*; the *Holy Mother of God* was celebrated last Sunday on January 1.

Feast of Epiphany

The feast of the Epiphany is part of our larger celebration of the Incarnation. Christmas is the day when Christians celebrate Christ becoming one among us as a man. The Epiphany *repeats* the *Good News* of God's appearance. Coming from the Greek, the word *Epiphany* means *Manifestation*. In other words, this feast tells us that God is not only among us but *He* can be *seen* and be *recognized*. *He* is *Light* in the midst of darkness.

Light Breaking Through the Darkness

We have just passed the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. We will now experience and hopefully enjoy a little more of the earth's light each day. Christmas is itself about *Light*. Evergreens, which signify life without end are brought indoors and decorated with lights; beautiful lights, some flashing some not, but all signifying that *Christ is the Light of the world*.



It is Jesus who dwells among us and within us. As we have said so often throughout the *Advent Season*, the lights that dress up our holiday garland and Christmas trees act as a visual reminder that something special is about to happen. For men and women of faith, the flashing lights, the shining tinsel and the ringing bells point to the closeness of Jesus *in* and *to* the world.

The Jovous Spirit of the Season

The Christmas season is a wonderful time of the year. If we *permit* ourselves, we can feel the *positive energy around us*. As difficult as it might be, we *need* to force ourselves to put aside the worries, preoccupations and stressors of the moment as well as the fears of the future and allow ourselves to experience the *joy* and the anticipation of the Christmas season, and the *magic* that surrounds the season. Families are reunited, and in some cases, they come together after a two-year plus separation because of the COVID restrictions. Grown children returning to their parents' home with their own young families, other young adults return from college, relatives reunite and service men and women venture home from foreign shores. Children, perhaps little toddlers are seen for the first time after the 2-year hiatus as they serve to unit and bring family members together as only a child can.



Reunions of all kinds ensue after longer separations as family members and friends strive to put aside past differences in an attempt to begin again. The Christmas season is about *strengthening the bonds* of love and friendship, *of family*, all of which *light* up our lives like the twinkling of the star that glows from the top of our Christmas trees.

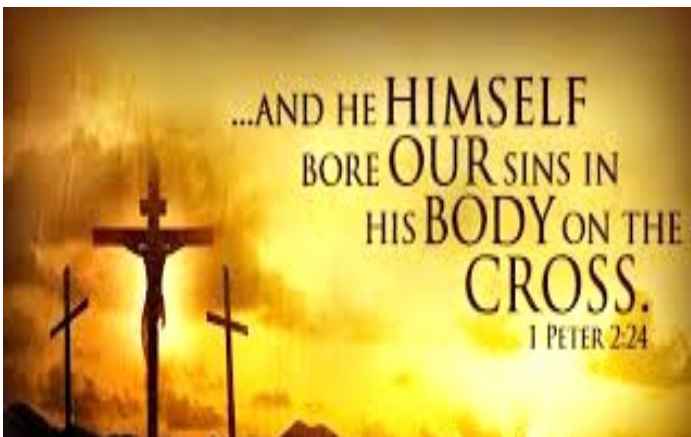
Saint Matthew

Saint Matthew tells us that it is not an earthly king that leads us. Rather, *he* who leads us is someone born for the poor; who has come into the world not in a four-star hotel but in a stable meant for livestock. A child born in a feeding trough is *he* who will become *Food* for the world. The name *Bethlehem* means *little house of bread*; thus, whenever we are fed, God is present, lighting the way to his Son as this same *Light* led the Magi.



On this feast of the Epiphany, the Church reminds us of our need to recognize the presence of Jesus *in* and *to* the world, just as the Magi did who traveled from distant shores bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

- *Gold* is given to kings;
- *Incense* is a gift given to priests;
- *Myrrh* is an ointment used for the dead. This *King* and *Priest* will bring new life into the world and in addition, he will die for you and me.



Gifts of Our Lives

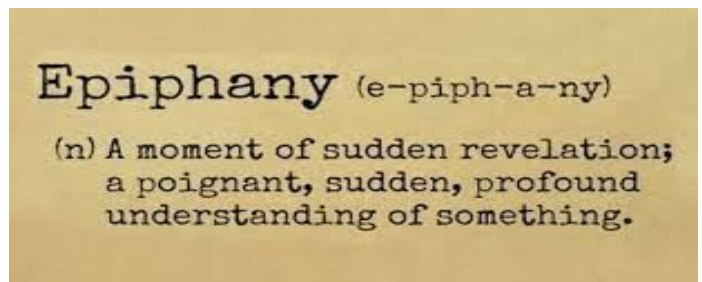
The gifts that we bring to the Christ Child are *not* the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Rather, we bring the gifts of our lives; lives lived-out in faith. This is a faith that should elicit *genuine joy* upon hearing God's *Word*. It is *only* with faith that we can recognize *true Light*. This is *Light* that calls us from the dark shores of our hearts, which too often give birth to sin, depression, anger and hopelessness. This is *Light* that calls us forth with an invitation to embrace *real* joy and perhaps, a bit of inner peace in the *meaning of the moment*.

The Prophet Isaiah

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah (60:1-6) writes of the Jew's return from exile from Babylon to Jerusalem. On this particular night, which is described by Isaiah the ruins of the Temple are adorned with thousands of candles to mark the Israelites' return. This vision inspired Isaiah to speak of the "*Light of God*." *The Light* had returned to Jerusalem. We too, long to see the *Light* manifested in our own lives. Like Isaiah who saw God in the beauty of a night that was set ablaze by thousands of candles, and like Saint Matthew who saw God present in a manger, we too, are called to *open our eyes, our hearts, our minds* to see the manifestation of God's glory in the here and now despite, or in spite of the trials and tribulations of daily life.

Daily Epiphanies

Epiphanies, the manifestations of God's goodness and God's presence happen all around us, every single day. How often we are unaware of the many miracles all around us; subtle invitations from Jesus to *rediscover the sacred* in the midst of the profane. The message of Christmas provides each of us with an annual reminder to embrace Gospel truths by becoming an instrument of the peace that the Christ Child brought to the world at his birth.



Each of us is called by nature of our baptism to strive to seek-out Jesus who continues to be with us and among us, and who calls each of us by name to a deeper sensitivity of his life within our life. This is the meaning of Christmas. This is the meaning of Epiphany. Epiphany is about RECOGNITION of that which *continues* to be REVEALED: Jesus!



The feast of the Epiphany is an annual reminder that each of us must strive to rediscover and to celebrate Jesus in the present, to find him in the world, in both friend and foe, and to experience him in the situations and circumstances of our daily lives. As we realize the presence of Christ in our midst, we also preserve and continue the true *meaning* and the *true spirit* of Christmas throughout the New Year.



If we are to find Jesus in our daily lives, we must prevent the world from becoming a distraction and thus, from interfering with our relationship with the Lord. The feast of the Epiphany becomes an invitation and a reminder that we, perhaps, need to slow down a bit and *savor* each moment; moments that are fleeting. Men and women of faith need to recognize that in moving quickly through their lives, they miss those *minor epiphanies*, those small miracles where Jesus speaks quietly in the depths of our soul.

Christmas: A Frame of Mind

Christmas does not last a *mere* day. Neither is it over at the Epiphany. Christmas must be *embraced* as a frame of mind, an *enduring reality* and as an attitude that compels each of us to seek *peace on earth good will to all*. The best way to preserve and to keep the *Christmas Spirit* alive is to receive Christmas *like a child*; daily trying to capture the mystery and the anticipation, but in a way that takes us closer to the *Risen Lord*. Perhaps, this was God's reason for sending His Son into the world, not as an adult but as an infant.

Christmas is not a time nor a season,
but a state of mind. To cherish peace
and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy,
is to have the real spirit of Christmas.

I often ponder as to why God sent Jesus into the world as a helpless infant. Saint Matthew gives us an account of Jesus bringing a child into the presence of His disciples.

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' So, he called a little child to him in the midst of them, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven'" (Matthew 8.33).

Become Like a Child

What did Jesus mean when he told his disciples that they had to become *like* a child? As I thought about the above passage, for years, I felt myself reacting to its message. Why do I have to become *like* a child when it has taken so long to become an adult? To become *child-like* means that one takes on the characteristics of a child without undergoing a regression and acting immature or infantile.

Childhood is a beautiful stage in human life. It is a time far too brief. It is filled with imagination and wonder and sheer fascination with the world and its opportunities. Childhood is characterized by an *unconditional* openness and *joy*. To become *like* a child is to recapture the joy within our souls, viewing it like the precious gift that it was meant to be.



The meaning and the impact of Jesus' mandate to become *child-like* became very clear when I had the opportunity many years ago of observing a group of preschoolers at play. Minutes after I began watching, I had an epiphany, as if a bright light suddenly illuminated my soul, I became keenly aware of what Jesus meant when he told his disciples to become *child-like* as a prerequisite for realizing God's kingdom. Children possess qualities that are distinctive of God's kingdom; qualities that we as adults quickly forget or dismiss altogether, viewing such as being impractical for success in our adult world.



Have you ever noticed the *spirit* of freedom and *spontaneity* that children exhibit? It comes from the presence of authentic *joy* at the core of their being. It is a joy that is neither altered nor diminished with the external circumstances or situations occurring around them. Such a joy comes from an unconscious and innate desire to love and to be loved.



Not having learned to mistrust, children seem to approach the world with genuine optimism and joy. Their spontaneity is seen in no better way than by watching them at play where they are able to discover the world without risk. Through play, children can test the limits and practice their own future roles as well as experience the roles and feelings of others.

Joy leads to a genuine desire to please but not with the intention of a reward. Rather, as a way of *affirming* the other. Children love to please. Even during those times when children might find themselves at odds either with an adult or a peer, they never stop trusting. Children are always willing to begin again when they are hurt or unhappy. Children are always willing to forgive and move on. They possess neither the need nor the desire for retaliation. Real joy never entertains, nor does it give way to malice.

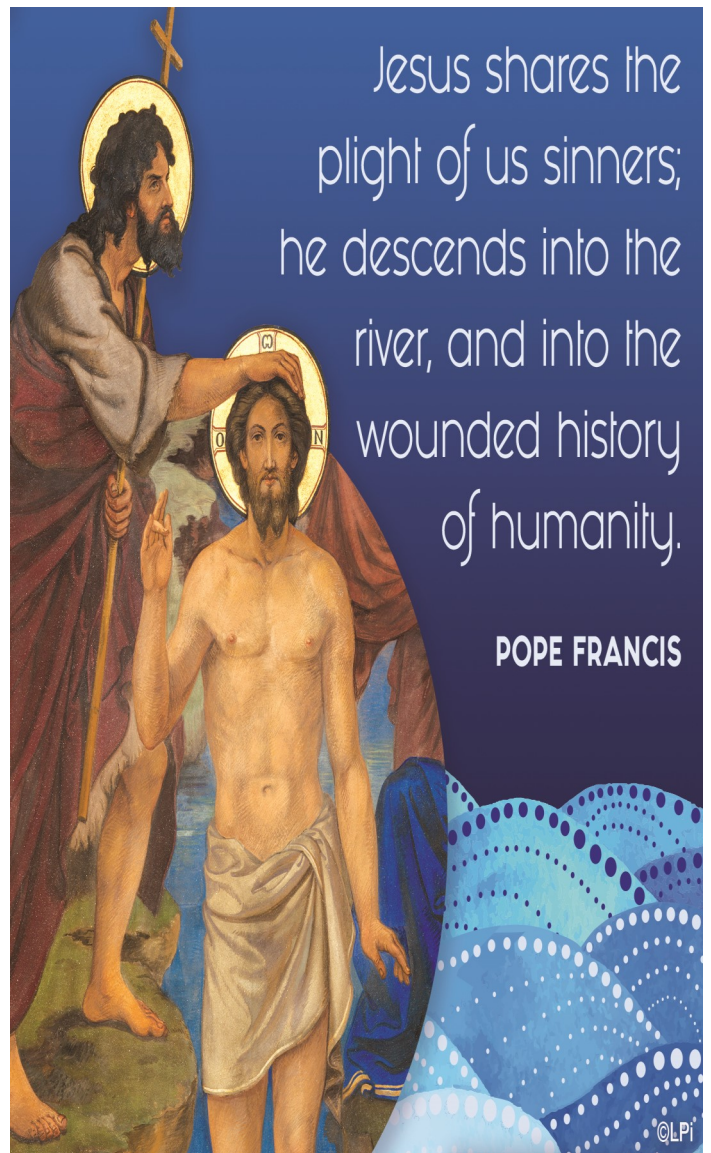


Children have the ability to love and accept others unconditionally. They are free of guile and duplicity. Children are unaware of difference. Skin color, racial profiling, economic status or family history are never prerequisites for engaging a peer in play or choosing another for a friend. Joy knows no difference.

Perhaps, this is what God wanted the world to learn from the birth of his Son on that first Christmas, i.e., that in order to appreciate the true meaning and message of the season, men and women of faith must experience it with the simplicity of a child. For only then can individuals (re-)capture the real joy that God intended for humankind. “*Joy to the world, for the Lord has come.*”

Become like the child and *recapture* and *discover* *child-like joy* in 2023. Hold on to it! Protect it! Cultivate it! Let it be the very first thing that people see in you. In this way, you will *not* miss seeing and experiencing the numerous epiphanies that come your way on a daily basis; epiphanies that for too long, you may have missed.

A Happy & Joy-Filled New Year. **JNM**





From the Pen of the Parish Nurse
Kimberly Petrillo, R.N.

SUGAR OVERLOAD

Excessive Consumption of Sugar

The average American consumes an average of 270 calories of sugar per day, the equivalent of 17 teaspoons. This is well above the American Heart Association's recommendation of 6 teaspoons for women and 7 teaspoons for men per day.

Excessive consumption of sugar result in numerous negative implications to the health of the body.



Sugar 101

Sucrose is the scientific name for table sugar. Sugars can be categorized as monosaccharides or disaccharides. Sucrose, glucose and fructose are three kinds of sugar that contain the same number of calories, gram per gram. These three kinds of sugar are all found naturally in fruits, vegetable, dairy products and grains. They are also added to many processed foods. These sugars differ in their chemical structures, the way the body digests and metabolizes them, and the manner in which they affect our overall health and well-being.

Foods with High Sugar Content

The ten foods that are shockingly high in sugar include:

- ♦ Granola,
- ♦ Barbecue Sauce
- ♦ Granola Bars & many protein bars
- ♦ Dried fruit
- ♦ Low fat yogurt
- ♦ Canned fruit
- ♦ Beef Jerky
- ♦ Tomato Soup

Consuming excessive sugar hijacks the brain, sending a signal to the brain's pleasure center (*nucleus accumbens*), which does two things:

1. Activates the reward pathways causing a surge of dopamine, referred to as the *feel-good hormone* and serotonin, which affects mood, feelings of well-being and inhibitions.

2. Affects the prefrontal cortex (brain), which releases hormones that persistently urge the brain to remember the pleasurable feeling initially felt while consuming the sugar.



The Brain's Addiction

The brain becomes addicted to sugar because most people do not eat just one cookie, or just one piece of candy and feel satisfied. Satisfaction is usually *not* achieved with small amounts of sugar; thus, the pleasure center of the brain becomes activated and needs to keep its "high" at any cost. Sugar gives the body a quick burst of energy and raises one's blood sugar very quickly.

Blood Sugar

As the cells absorb the sugar, blood sugar levels drop, which results in one feeling jittery and/or anxious. These added sugars are tricky because the individual does not realize what is happening to his/her body. Consequently, craving more sugar, the individual easily becomes hooked /addicted in the same way that drugs of abuse such as: nicotine, cocaine and heroin hijack the brain's reward pathway and make the user dependent. This dependency results in an increase in the neuro-chemical and behavioral responses. In other words, excessive sugars result in the same kind of dependency (craving) as narcotics.



Sugar and the Body

Foods with added sugar can contribute to extra calories and offer *little nutritional value*. Added sugars are found in foods that also contain solid fats such as: butter, margarine and shortening in baked goods. These additional calories from sugar cause weight gain and definitely have a negative, unhealthy effect on the body. The more sugar consumed, the greater the weight gain.

Fructose is probably the worse sugar for the body. Fructose is processed in the liver and large amounts of this sugar can damage the liver. When fructose is broken down by the liver, it is transformed into fat. This can subsequently cause non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which is excess fat build-up in the liver. NASH (non-alcoholic steatohepatitis) is a fatty liver, inflammation and steatosis, which is the scarring of the liver. Many of these conditions increase the risk of cirrhosis and the need for a liver transplant.



Sugar & Your Arteries

Consuming excess sugar causes the pancreas to produce more insulin; thus, the extra insulin in the bloodstream can affect the arteries throughout the body. Excess sugar causes the walls of the arteries to become inflamed, grow thicker than normal and become stiff. This condition often stresses the heart and causes damage over time. This also increases the risk for a heart attack or stroke.

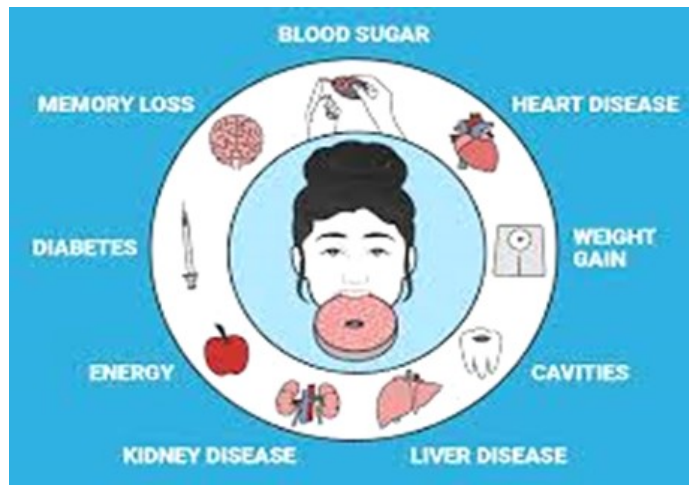


Excessive Sugar & Major Bodily Organs

The Brain: Overtime, excessive sugar consumption can re-wire the brain's pathways. Diets, for example that are laden with processed and sugar-heavy foods can increase the risk for depression, by 50%.

The Skin: A sugar penetrates and intrudes the body; proteins combine with the cells of the skin; thus, aging the skin and causing wrinkles.

The Pancreas: Excessive sugar consumption causes the pancreas to become over-worked by pumping out insulin in response to the extra sugar in the blood stream. Consequently, the pancreas will begin to breakdown, increasing the possibility for developing Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.



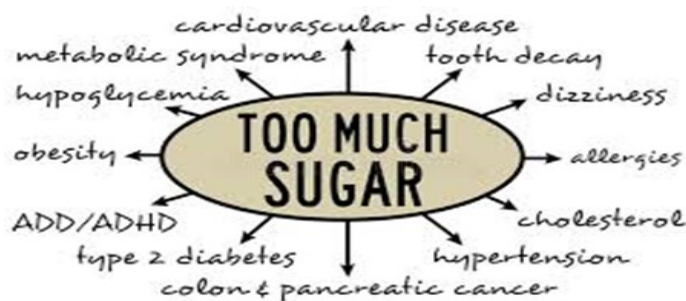
The kidney's: A sugar overload will damage the delicate filtration system of the kidneys. When blood sugar levels reach a certain level, the kidney's start to release the excess sugar into the urine. Diabetes, for example, is one of the main causes of kidney failure. Diabetes that is left unchecked and uncontrolled can result in kidney damage.

A diet high in sugar can also result in chronic inflammation, where the body's **immune system** becomes activated, resulting in damage to healthy cells.

Joints: An over consumption of sugar worsens joint pain because of the increased inflammation in the body. High-sugar diets, for example, pump inflammation cytokines into the bloodstream, which can aggravate arthritis. Limiting sugar intake can help decrease arthritic pain and improve mobility.

Tooth Decay: Sugar consumption can cause tooth decay. After eating sugar, bacteria from the mouth produces a layer of plaque over the teeth. These bacteria react with the sugar that is present in drinks and foods. This reaction triggers the release of acid that damages teeth, increasing tooth decay and causing cavities.

The Heart: Excessive sugar inflames the lining of the arteries to the heart. This increases the risk of a stroke and a heart attack.



As consumers, we must become more vigilant in reviewing food/drink labels, recognizing high levels of sugar in foods and drinks that market themselves as being healthy. Some added sugar names include:

dextrose, sucrose, agave, nectar, maltose, molasses, honey, high fructose corn syrup, corn sweetener, crystalline fructose and evaporated cane juice.

High fructose corn syrup is added to many foods and can be extremely harmful to the body and bodily organs. Limiting the consumption of added sugar is crucial in order to maintain good health.

The saying: "We are what we eat" sounds like a cliché, yet, it is filled with truth. The food that we eat literally becomes who we are. It influences the physical, mental and emotional well-being for every person.

Consider reducing the sugar in your diet. Take note as to how much better your body will feel. As energy levels in your body improve, overall balance in the body will be restored.



God has blessed each person with one body to care for. *What actions do you take each day to care for your body?* A body that is not well cared for overtime will break down: physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

My advice for each one of you as we begin 2023 is the following: *Do everything possible to value and care for your body, the heart, the mind and the soul. Life is precious. Never take one day for granted! KP*

Parish nurse can be contacted via email kimp51@comcast.net or mobile 203-980-0931. Health counseling available by appointment. Suggestions for health articles welcomed.

FROM THE DESK OF FR. PATRICK

Over the past few months, I have been thinking about starting a new ministry at St. Pio of Pietrelcina parish. After much thought and consultation, I have discerned that there is a need for a men's group here at our parish. My vision for this new group is to be rooted in Faith, Formation, and Fraternity.

This new group is open to all men of the parish over the age of 18. We will meet weekly at a time and day of the week to be determined. I realize that a weekly meeting might seem like a lot, but this group is meant to be a no pressure, no commitment kind of group. It will be a "come when you can" policy. I considered doing it once a month, however, if someone is unable to attend one of the meetings, then they would have to wait two months or more between meetings.

With the three core aspects of Faith, Formation, and Fraternity, my vision is for each meeting to include all three of these aspects. Meeting will most likely run for 90 minutes, and will include some aspect of Faith (prayer, rosary, Mass, liturgy of the hours, etc.), Formation (talk from a priest/deacon, online video series, etc.), and Fraternity (opportunities to meet other men in the parish, particularly men who attend a different Mass or church campus).

I will be utilizing the St. Bernadette campus for this group, as I believe it offers the best facilities for what I am planning. Between the hall, church, and school all being connected, it would allow us the space to pray (church), to be formed (classrooms in the school), and enjoy each other's company (church hall). We also have a kitchen where we can prepare food from time to time.

This group will be starting during Lent of 2023, with Ash Wednesday occurring on February 22. Those men who are interested in being part of the group please send me an email at kanepmk@gmail.com. I prefer email correspondence. However, if anyone does not have email, you may leave me a message on my parish line (203) 469-0764 ext. 232. When corresponding with me, please let me know your preference in terms of which days/times work best for you. One of my ideas is to have our meetings early Saturday mornings, from 7am-8:30am. This is just an idea, and I can adjust if there is a more desirable day or time. However, similar groups at other parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford have found success doing early morning meetings. A group in Harwinton at Our Lady of Hope parish started before Covid would routinely get 25 or more men at 6am on a Wednesday morning.

My hope is for the men of the parish to have an opportunity to grow in their faith and meet other men in the parish who share that faith. Please contact me if you are interested in this new men's group.

God Bless,

Fr. Patrick

FR. MURASSO'S MESSAGE BOARD

Prayer for Epiphany

Dear Jesus,
though a newborn, the wise men knew your
greatness.

On a hint from the heavens,
they traveled far from their places of
comfort

so that they could honor you.

From their belief in your divinity,
they gave amazing gifts, offerings that
symbolized

your life, power, and even your death.

And because of a dream in the night,
they altered their well-laid plans to return
home

in order to protect you.

May we be so willing to honor, sacrifice, and
obey,

all for love of you,
as we meditate on the meaning of this day.
Amen.



Pray the *Divine Mercy* with Us

Every Saturday at 11:00am

Our Lady of Pompeii Chapel

**For the Sake of His Sorrowful Passion
Have Mercy on us and on the whole world**

Now is the Time for Mercy



Every Thursday 6:00 PM

Our Lady of Pompeii Chapel

Evenings 8:00 PM on ZOOM

Contact: Sally Mucka @ 203-415-2710

Giving Tree Thank You to the parish of St. Pio of Pietrelcina



On behalf of the eighty-five families who received Gifts this year for their children, Father Murasso and the Tree Committee would like to express a warm and grateful thank you to all for realizing the profound and joyful spirit of giving that resides in our parish family. Your generous donations of presents, gift cards and cash were amazing, and we were able to help other struggling families.

To all those who helped make the tree tags, sorted, wrapped, and distributed the gifts, thank you for your dedication to the tree and getting it done.

God Bless you all and may the peace of our savior Jesus Christ be with you always.





**Knights of Columbus Rodrigo Council 44 of St. Pio Pietrelcina
Parish (St. Bernadette Church Campus)
is now selling tickets for our 300 club**

Dear Rodrigo Council 44 Members, St. Pio Pietrelcina, and Friends,

Knights of Columbus Rodrigo Council 44 is offering an opportunity to join our annual 300 Club. The Club will run from January 2023 through December 2023.

Four winning numbers will be drawn each month for twelve (12) months.

**EACH ENTRY HAS
49
CHANCES TO WIN**

FIRST NUMBER wins \$150.00

SECOND NUMBER wins \$100.00

THIRD NUMBER wins \$75.00

FOURTH NUMBER wins \$50.00

One Grand Prize of \$1,000.00 will be drawn in December of 2023.

Numbers will be drawn the second Saturday of each month at our Council meeting. All winners will be notified by phone or e-mail. Names will also be placed in Church Parish bulletin.

All WINNING NUMBERS will be returned for the following month's drawing.

Tickets for Membership is limited to 300.
YOU MUST BE IN IT TO WIN IT!
The cost for memberships is \$50.00

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS RODRIGO COUNCIL 44 PROCEEDS

FROM THIS PROGRAM WILL BENEFIT OUR COUNCIL'S CHARITABLE DONATIONS TO
ST. PIO OF PIETRELCA PARISH COMMUNITY, OUR COMMUNITY IN GENERAL AND THOSE IN NEED.



Should you wish to reserve a specific number please select a number from 1-300

Please indicate your preferred numbers. First, Second or Third Choice.

Numbers will be assigned on a first come first served basis.

If numbers are not available the next available number will be assigned.

Payment must be made at time of number selection. Only 1 entry per form

1st Choice: _____ 2nd Choice: _____ 3rd Choice: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Cash: _____ Check: _____

Call Mike Fimiani 203.627.9216

***VISIT THE HOLY LAND
WITH FR. MURASSO***



**A 10-DAY PILGRIMAGE IS
BEING DEVELOPED FOR JUNE,
2023. Prior to its KICK-OFF, a
minimum of 20 people is needed.
JOIN US!**

**Seriously interested perspective travelers
should contact Fr. Murasso, ASAP.**

**We will be visiting: Caesarea, Haifa,
Tiberias, Mount of Beatitudes Golan Heights,
Samaria & Jacob's Well, Sea of Galilee,
Cana, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem.**



WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

Jesus may be calling you?

Email: jeremiah.murasso@aol.com

Cell: 860-977-7675

**Knights of Columbus
#3300
Valentine's Day Dance**

**Saturday, February 11
7:00pm - 11:00pm**

**Our Lady of Pompeii
Church Hall**

**\$10.00 per person
DJ**

**Set-Up's & Coffee
Supplied**

B.Y.O.B & Snacks

**Call Joe Monico for tickets
at 203-887-2137**

Bring a dessert to share



THANK YOU, to the Porto Funeral Home & the DeLucia Family for their generous donation of poinsettias that were donated to St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish at Our Lady of Pompeii & St. Vincent de Paul, which were locally grown by the Vaiuso family at the Vaiuso Nursery in Branford, CT.



**Mass
Schedule**

January 7 & 8, 2023

4:00pm OLOP: Fr. Patrick

4:30pm SVDP: Fr. Murasso

8:00am OLOP: Murasso

9:00am SB: Fr. Patrick

10:00am OLOP: Fr. Kelly

11:15am SVDP: Fr. Patrick

January 14 & 15, 2022

4:00pm OLOP: Fr. Murasso

4:30pm SVDP: Fr. Patrick

8:00am OLOP: Fr. Murasso

9:00am SB: Fr. Kelly

10:00am OLOP: Fr. Patrick

11:15am SVDP: Fr. Murasso

January 21 & 22, 2022

4:00pm OLOP: Fr. Murasso

4:30pm SVDP: Msgr. Walker

8:00am OLOP: Fr. Borino

9:00am SB: Fr. Murasso

10:00am OLOP: Fr. Kelly

11:15am SVDP: Fr. Murasso

January 28 & 29, 2023

4:00pm OLOP: Fr. Murasso

4:30pm SVDP: Fr. Patrick

8:00am OLOP: Fr. Patrick

9:00am SB: Fr. Murasso

10:00am OLOP: Fr. Kelly

11:15am SVDP: Fr. Patrick