

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



## 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



"Now I have seen and testified that he is  
the Son of God." - Jn 1:34

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

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**Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**January 15, 2023**

### *Mass Intentions for the Week*

#### **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 (Birthday 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

#### **MONDAY, January 16 - Martin Luther King Day**

8:00am OLOP + Mary Mack  
by Vittorio Family

8:00am SVDP + **PRAYER SERVICE**

#### **TUESDAY, January 17 – St. Anthony**

8:00am OLOP Healing Mass for Fr. Lavorgna  
by Morning Mass Family

8:00am SVDP + Laura Anderson

#### **WEDNESDAY, January 18 - Weekday**

8:00am OLOP + Joyce Hutt

8:00am SVDP + Antoinette Gambardella  
by Porto Funeral Home

#### **THURSDAY, January 19 - Weekday**

8:00am OLOP + Peter Scrivani  
by M/M Daniel Elliott & Family

8:00am ST. B + Fr. Thomas Mitchell

#### **FRIDAY, January 20 - St. Fabian**

8:00am ST. B +

#### **SATURDAY, January 21 - Vigil – 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

4:00pm OLOP + Sue, Joseph & Salvatore Friello  
by Susan Friello

4:30pm SVDP + Annette Talbot  
by Family

#### **SUNDAY, January 22 – 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

8:00am OLOP + Rose M. Hopkins ( Birthday)  
by Daughter, Sally

9:00am ST. B + Emily Catherine Ashby  
by Family

10:00am OLOP + Catherine & Immaculata Granata  
by Family

11:15am SVDP + Andrew, Catherine & David Dunaj,  
Catherine Nicolari & Mary Izzo  
by Family

### **STEWARDSHIP**

**Regular Collection** \$9,583.00

**Monthly Collection** \$4,758.00

**Online Giving** \$706.00

**January 21 & January 22 Second Collection:**  
Catholic High Schools

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

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Sunday: Is 49:3, 5-6/Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10/1 Cor 1:1-3/Jn 1:29-34

Monday: Heb 5:1-10/Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4/Mk 2:18-22

Tuesday: Heb 6:10-20/Ps 111:1-2, 4-5, 9 and 10c/Mk 2:23-28

Wednesday: Heb 7:1-3, 15-17/Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4/Mk 3:1-6

Thursday: Heb 7:25—8:6/Ps 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 17/Mk 3:7-12

Friday: Heb 8:6-13/Ps 85:8 and 10, 11-12, 13-14/Mk 3:13-19

Saturday: Heb 9:2-3, 11-14/Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9/Mk 3:20-21

### **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](mailto:stpioofpietrelcina@gmail.com)

# MINISTRY & EVENT CALENDAR

<b>SUNDAY, JANUARY 15</b> No Events or Activities Scheduled	<b>SUNDAY, JANUARY 22</b> No Events or Activities Scheduled
<b>MONDAY, JANUARY 16</b> <b>Parish Offices Closed</b> <b>Holy Hour</b> - 8:30-9:30am in Our Lady of Pompeii Church <b>Bible Study</b> - 7:00pm on Zoom <b>Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823</b>	<b>MONDAY, JANUARY 23</b> <b>Holy Hour</b> - 8:30-9:30am in Our Lady of Pompeii Church <b>Bible Study</b> - 7:00pm on Zoom <b>Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823</b>
<b>TUESDAY, JANUARY 17</b> <b>Rosary Group</b> - 8:00 pm on Zoom <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>	<b>TUESDAY, JANUARY 24</b> <b>Rosary Group</b> - 8:00 pm on Zoom <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>
<b>WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18</b> <b>Bible Study</b> - 6:30pm at SVDP Parish Office <b>Contact Marie Connors at 203-468-1184</b> <b>Rosary Group</b> - 8:00 pm on Zoom <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25</b> <b>Bible Study</b> - 6:30pm at SVDP Parish Office <b>Contact Marie Connors at 203-468-1184</b> <b>Rosary Group</b> - 8:00 pm on Zoom <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>
<b>THURSDAY, JANUARY 19</b> <b>Scriptural Rosary</b> - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>	<b>THURSDAY, JANUARY 26</b> <b>Scriptural Rosary</b> - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>
<b>FRIDAY, JANUARY 20</b> <b>Rosary Group</b> - 8:00 pm on Zoom <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>	<b>FRIDAY, JANUARY 27</b> <b>Rosary Group</b> - 8:00 pm on Zoom <b>Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</b>
<b>SATURDAY, JANUARY 21</b> No Events or Activities Scheduled	<b>SATURDAY, JANUARY 28</b> No Events or Activities Scheduled

## Knights of Columbus Rodrigo Council #44

Thank you to all who supported the KofC Rodrigo Council #44 300 Club.

The proceeds from this past year's club enabled our council to offset several parish expenses. Such as, several expenses for our parish raffle, permits, rentals, sponsorship and food. Several donations were also made towards parish needs and repairs. The council was also able to pick up portions of the expenses of our monthly senior meals, keeping cost to a minimum.

In addition to helping our parish several donations were made to charitable organizations and the community.

Without your support of the 300 Club, this would not be possible.

God bless you and thank you for your kindness and support..

Our parish and all of you who support our endeavors are also winners in helping us to do our charitable works.



## 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 ~ Tony Bianco & Andrea Palmucci by Family*

*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](mailto:stpiofpietrelcina@gmail.com) so that our parishioners and friends can be remembered in our prayers.

**Midnight Run  
Taylor Avenue Campus**

The Midnight Run for **February** is the **2nd Monday**, which is **February 13th**. 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, February 13th**. 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.

*Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7; Acts 10:34-38*  
*Matthew 3:13-17*

### **Baptism of the Lord**



Last Sunday, January 8, the Church celebrated the feast of the *Epiphany*: God revealing Himself through Jesus Christ. On Monday, January 9, the Church celebrated the feast of the *Baptism of the Lord*. When the Solemnity of the *Epiphany* is celebrated on January 7 or 8, the feast of the *Baptism of the Lord* is celebrated on the following Monday. With the celebration of the *Baptism of Jesus*, the Church concludes the *Christmas Season*. This Weekend, the Church begins *Ordinary Time*; the *Second Week in Ordinary Time*. We remain in *Ordinary Time* (green vestments) until Ash Wednesday on February 22, when the Church begins the season of Lent.

The *baptism of Jesus* in the Jordan River by his cousin, John the Baptist is an invitation to all Christians to renew and to reawaken their commitment to Jesus, especially as we begin a brand-new year.

#### **The Meaning of Jesus' Baptism**

The *baptism of Jesus* has significant meaning for Christians living in the twenty-first century. The Church teaches that the sacrament of baptism is entrance into the *family of believers*. The Church, also teaches that through the waters of baptism, the sin committed by Adam and Eve as a result of their disobedience to God, which is called *Original Sin* is washed from the soul.

Baptism is rebirth, a second chance in which, men and women of faith are given an invitation by God to accept and to utilize His grace. It is through baptism that we as believers are *identified* as the *elect* of God. Baptism affords Christian men and women with the opportunity and the invitation to turn away from sinful ways and to *embrace* God's love through Jesus Christ.

#### **Baptism and the Early Church**

The *baptism of Jesus* in the Jordan marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. This event in the ministry of Jesus was of the utmost importance in the lives of the first Jewish and Gentile converts as it reinforced for the early Church an understanding of itself in terms of its bond with the *New Covenant* and with Jesus.

In addition to St. Matthew (3:13-17), Jesus' baptism is also recorded in the gospel accounts of St. Mark (1:9-11), St. Luke (3:21-22) and St. John (1:29-34). The fact that the four evangelists record the baptism of Jesus is another indication of the prominence of this event in the life of the early Church.



Moreover, the fact that the four evangelists record the baptism of Jesus reinforces its authenticity as a historical event in the life of Jesus. It also indicates just how important this event in the life of Jesus was for the early Church, primarily because Jesus' baptism connects him with the Father in the voice that can be heard through the clouds. It was important for the early Church to understand the bond that Jesus shared with the Father. It was equally important for the early Church to show Christ's identification with a sinful world.

That Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan is among the most irrefutable of historical facts in the gospel tradition. It is unlikely that the early Christians could have or would have invented such a story, especially because Jesus is portrayed as being submissive to John the Baptist as he approaches John for baptism.

The important focus for the early Church as well as for the Church in the twenty-first century is the fact that Jesus submitted himself to a baptism that was intended for sinners. Mark, Matthew and John all make reference to the fact that John recognized his own unworthiness in the presence of Jesus. Matthew is the only evangelist who goes into detail with regard to John's feelings of unworthiness:

*"John would have prevented him [Jesus] saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?' But Jesus answered, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented"* (Matthew 3:13-15).

It was important that Matthew, a Jew who was writing for Jews reinforce for those who had converted from Judaism to Christianity that Jesus, the *Second Moses* of the line of David and the long-awaited-for Messiah was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

#### **Identification with Humanity**

In permitting himself to be baptized, Jesus identifies with a suffering and sinful humanity. Jesus' baptism, unlike the rest of humanity has nothing to do with the need for forgiveness or a *second chance*.



Jesus' baptism is a baptism that identifies with a sinful and broken humanity. His is a baptism that permitted him to become like those he was sent to serve.

*"Like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people"* (Hebrews. 2:17).

#### Jesus' Public Ministry

The baptism of Jesus inaugurates his public ministry, which for the gospel accounts of Mark and Matthew include a desert experience immediately following the baptism.

*"And the Spirit immediately drove him [Jesus] out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him"* (Mark 1:13).

*"Then [immediately following his baptism] Jesus was led up [out of the water] by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil"* (Matthew 4:1).

Luke, however, does not mention the desert immediately following Jesus' baptism. Luke describes Jesus as beginning his ministry: *"Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work"* (3:23). John, also describes Jesus beginning his public ministry as he chooses his first apostles.

#### Theophany



In all four gospel accounts, the evangelists record what the Church refers to as a *theophany*: God speaking through the heavens as a sign of His approval. In Matthew's account, the evangelist describes the *theophany* in the third person:

*"And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am pleased'"* (Matthew 3:16-17).



Both Mark and Luke describe the Father speaking directly to Jesus, indicating His great esteem for the Son:

*"And just as he [Jesus] was coming out of the water, he [Jesus] saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased'"* (Mark 1:10-11).

*"Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus, also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, The Beloved; with you I am well pleased'"* (Luke 3:21-22).

In John's account, the evangelist himself is described as having been the recipient of the Father's message and as such, he receives the Father's approval of His Son directly from God:

*"And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from the heaven like a dove, and it remained on him [Jesus]. I myself [John] did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God'"* (John 1:32-34).

#### The Father's Esteem of the Son

In all four gospel accounts, the author speaks of God's great admiration and esteem for the Son. The Father was *well pleased* because of His Son's acceptance and his willingness to *"fulfill all righteousness"* by submitting himself to the Father's plan for the salvation of humankind. God's voice heard from the heavens provided the early Church with a level of certainty that God Himself had given His *approval* to His Son as the Messiah.

God also reinforces His pleasure with the Son's acceptance of his mission. All four evangelists record this special intervention from heaven where God speaks because it was very important for the young Church and its many converts to understand and to believe that Jesus was:

- From God
- Of God
- God Himself.

### The Significance of Jesus' Baptism

What significance does the *baptism of Jesus* have for postmodern Christians living in the twenty-first century? As baptized Christians, men and women of faith share in the salvation won for us by Jesus. The *baptism of Jesus* is a reminder to each of us of God's merciful love to the extent that we are willing to turn away from sinful ways. As disciples and followers of Jesus, we too, must descend into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him to a life of true happiness. Baptism makes Christians the *adopted sons and daughters* of God who like Jesus have been entrusted with the same mission for making God's love present in the world; a world that continues to deny the need for His existence.



Numbered among the baptized, men and women of faith have the mission "*to fulfill all righteousness*" and to carry out God's plan in the same way that Jesus did. While this does not include dying the same bloody death on Calvary, it *does* mean that each perspective disciple carries his/her cross on a daily basis as Jesus tells his disciples immediately after Peter's profession of faith. The true disciple is called to see in life's struggles, the hand of God preparing each to become more faithful instruments of His *Word*. Each of us must carry a cross throughout our journey in this world.



### God's Mercy

Too often, we see our own personal trials as punishment for poor choices, perhaps, made in the past with little thought and no prayer. So often, too, we blame God for our own personal shortcomings and failures even though we know quite well that God is not to blame.

God is not a vindictive tyrant; neither is He the author of evil or misfortune. God does not desire that we make poor choices that will separate us from His love. For nothing we do can separate us from God's love and mercy.

### Free Choice

Man separates himself from God when he permits guilt and anger to take the place of *authentic* love and repentance. God *permits* the trials and tribulations of daily life as the consequence for giving humans *freedom of choice*. Baptism gives men and women of faith the *ability to see the hand of God* in their lives even in the darkest of nights and in the midst of the greatest of evils.

Man has a share in Jesus' mission, "*to fulfill all righteousness*" to the extent that he cultivates the ability to listen to God, and consequently, to understand His will. How do we know when we are carrying out God's will? In order to hear God's voice in our lives, we must begin to do something that we do not often do or at least...do well: LISTEN.



- We need to *listen* to God's voice within the depths of our souls where Christ lives.
- We need to *listen* to God in our prayers,
- We need to *listen* to Christ as he speaks in and through our family members, the people with whom we work, play or just happen to meet on any given day.

Our mission, by nature of our own baptismal promises is to reveal Christ's presence through the choices that we make on a daily basis and

- to *listen*,
- to *hear*,
- to *respond* in the same way that Mary and Joseph did at the invitation of God through the voice of the angel. This is the mission that comes with our own baptism.

### The Practice of Prayer

We are so accustomed to *sounding off* in our conversations with others that we often do the same in our conversation with God. Consequently, in both our conversations with God and with one another, we fail to *listen* because we are often anticipating our responses. In the same way, we fail to *hear* God's voice at the depth of our being: at the level of soul.



Baptism and belief in God *do not* guarantee that our lives will be free from sadness. Neither does it guarantee that everyday will be filled with rainbows. Faith in God *does* mean, however, that as we meet the daily challenges of living in a world gone mad, our belief in Jesus and our desire to embrace and live-out the *Good News* will sustain and fortify each of us to make choices that emulate His love.

Baptism means that we *share* in the mission and ministry of Jesus. We, too, must become extensions of God's plan for the salvation of the human race by how we live our lives and by how we relate to one another. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers; we are responsible for the welfare of one other.

As we begin a brand-new year, with brand new goals and resolutions, our baptismal promises require us to live out the true meaning of our own baptism. This means that we keep the *flame of faith* alive in our hearts and strive to live our daily lives as an extension of God's *Word*. Jesus is God's *Word*.



If this becomes the only New Year's resolution that we make, we will suddenly realize how quickly everything else in our lives will fall into place. **JNM**

## Something to Ponder



### The Book Proverbs

The *Book of Proverbs* forms part of the Old Testament's *Wisdom Literature*. *Proverbs* are a gathering of short sayings/teachings/advice concerning the wisdom of God. These sayings or instructions are meant to be an invitation to the reader to "*Fear the Lord*" as well as the invitation for adhering to God's law for effectively living a moral and ethical life and to discover permanent happiness.



The short, yet succinct instructions found throughout *Proverbs* enable its hearers to live without unnecessary difficulties. In other words, every person has a path to follow; however, there is only one correct way: *a way of life that has been ordered by the Divine*. It was from this perspective that the authors constructed these short lessons for life and for living.

The instructions/teachings that comprise the *Book of Proverbs* do not present an abstract ideal to live up to, or to strive after. Rather, the teachings that are described are meant to provide the hearer with a *formula* for success. This notion is rooted in a very important prerequisite from which all *Wisdom Literature* operates: *order to the universe*; a societal as well as a natural reality. World order is perhaps the most important theme in Egyptian wisdom. This "*order*" is referred to as (*ma'at*) truth and justice, which is reflected in the social order. *Ma'at*, is an ancient goddess and actually was the patroness of the sages.

The *Proverbs*/instructions are not about changing society; rather, they are about changing oneself. Initially, the *Proverbs* were composed for teaching youth about proper comportment. The sages of Egypt constructed a worldview based on the religious concepts of *ma'at*. The sages taught that God was involved in the personal lives of those who followed their teachings. Retributive justice was also at work in this relationship for those who erred.



The instructions that make up the *Book of Proverbs* are concise and at times, rather curt declarations of an apparent truth that is relevant and appropriate for correct behavior. The sayings/instructions are brief and are expressed artfully through: wordplay, irony and paradox. They can be characterized as sage-like, parental warnings inviting the individual, i.e., the young person to act cautiously and to look again at what he/she might have missed the first time; thus, to view an old reality in a new way.

The instructions are written in a *Golden Rule-like* manner; statements/advice, which are rooted in one basic notion: *the wise person is morally good; the fool is wicked*. The reader needs to decide where he/she fits with regard to the choices that he/she makes as well as the behaviors and choices made on a daily level.

I like to refer to the *Book of Proverbs* as *Hallmark Moments*, which are spoken and written by wise sages, referred to as “*the intelligentsia*” of their day. These wise sages offered teachings that focused on virtue, the good life, morality, fear of God as well as man’s relationship to one another and to God. Note, however, when speaking of the *fear of God*, the sages were not implying that one should be fearful of God or should he/she be trembling in his/her boots. Rather, the “*fear*” is translated as *reverence* and *respect* owed to God.

The fear of the Lord  
is the beginning  
of wisdom.

Proverbs 9:10

## Proverbs 16: 1-11, 16-33:

### *Maxims for a Happy Life*

#### What is Your Plan for 2023?

As we begin a brand-new year, it is good to reflect on the message of Proverbs, chapter 16, which is titled: *Maxims for a Happy Life*. Despite the fact that 2023 appears to be beginning the same way that 2022 ended, will you permit yourself to *discover* happiness and peace despite, or in spite of your daily trials? Or, will you allow the madness of the moment to reinforce fear and sadness? Which lens will you put on as you begin your journey through 2023? Hopefully, *Proverbs* can provide each of us with positive, uplifting data to program our spiritual barometers.

*1 Plans are made in human hearts, but from the LORD comes the tongue's response.*

*2 All one's ways are pure in one's own eyes, but the measurer of motives is the LORD.*

*3 Entrust your works to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.*

*4 The LORD has made everything for a purpose, even the wicked for the evil day.*

*5 Every proud heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured that none will go unpunished.*

*6 By steadfast loyalty, guilt is expiated, and by the fear of the LORD, evil is avoided.*

*7 When the LORD is pleased with someone's ways, he makes even enemies be at peace with them.*

*8 Better a little with justice, than a large income with injustice.*

*9 The human heart plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps.*

*10 An oracle is upon the king's lips, no judgment of his mouth is false.*

*11 Balance and scales belong to the LORD; every weight in the sack is his concern. [his work].*

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*16 How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is preferable to silver.*

*17 The path of the upright leads away [avoids] from misfortune; those who attend to their way guard their lives.*

*18 Pride goes before disaster, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

*19 It is better to be humble with the poor than to share plunder with the proud.*

*20 Whoever ponders a matter will be successful; happy the one who trusts in the LORD!*

21 *The wise of heart is esteemed for discernment, and pleasing speech gains a reputation for learning.*

22 *Good sense is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly is the training of fools.*

23 *The heart of the wise makes for eloquent speech, and increases the learning on their lips.*

24 *Pleasing words are a honeycomb, sweet to the taste and invigorating to the bones.*

25 *Sometimes a way seems right, but the end of it leads to death!*

26 *The laborer's appetite works for him, for his mouth urges him on.*

27 *Scoundrels are a furnace of evil, and their lips are like a scorching fire.*

28 *Perverse speech sows discord, and tale-bearing separates bosom friends.*

29 *The violent deceive their neighbors, and lead them into a way that is not good.*

30 *Whoever winks an eye plans perversity; whoever purses the lips does evil.*

31 *Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by a life that is just.*

32 *A patient man is better than warriors, and those who rule their temper, better than the conqueror of a city.*

33 *Into the bag the lot is cast, but from the LORD comes every decision.*

### **Interpretation**

Chapter 16, is a focus on the individual's purpose or motives and how he/she conforms to the LORD's standards. In other words, everything is subject to the dominion and plan of God. One's inability or unwillingness to adhere to God's plan will experience confusion; thus, he/she will experience division and discord in his/her life.

**1Plans are made in human hearts, but from the LORD comes the tongue's response.**

Men and women may have a plan for their lives, however, ultimately, God is in charge. One's most carefully executed plan may not be carried out because God just might have another plan in mind. And God always gets his way!

**2All one's ways are pure in one's own eyes, but the measurer of motives is the LORD.**

Men and women may in fact have the purest motives in mind in the orchestration of their plans for their lives, however, humans exhibit an infinite capacity for self-deception.

**3Entrust your works to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.**

All of man's actions are governed (not determined) by God. Thus, the best laid plans may not be in keeping with God's plan. Therefore, the sooner man relinquishes control to God, the happier he will be.

**4The LORD has made everything for a purpose, even the wicked for the evil day.**

All things happen for a purpose; all is part of God's rule, i.e., His ordered design. God has a purpose for everything that He has created. Similar to the other verses on creation, (8:22-31; Gen. 1; Ps. 104; Job 38-40), this verse begins by asserting that God has created everything in order to fulfill His own design.

**5Every proud heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured that none will go unpunished.**

The arrogant are not only condemned, they will not escape their due punishment because the LORD is the one who judges them. "Hand and hand, he shall not go unpunished" means: be assured, he will be punished.

**6By steadfast loyalty, guilt is expiated, and by the fear of the LORD, evil is avoided.**

Forgiveness is forthcoming based upon one's faithfulness and purity of heart. In other words, don't expect to raise your voice and hands in prayer to God and believe that He will listen to you, if in fact, you are in sin.

**7When the LORD is pleased with someone's ways; he makes even enemies be at peace with them.**

Peace is the reward for Wisdom. Obedience is a reflection of the covenantal blessings (Exo. 20:12; Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 28: 1-14; Prov. 10:30). IOW: He/she who has peace with God has the fundamental requirement of life with God. Yet, although God protects His own and watches over the faithful, He does not guarantee a trouble-free life, or a life without enemies. In all four Gospels, Jesus speaks about the disciple and his/her need to carry his/her cross.

**8Better a little with justice, then a large income with injustice.**

Justice is better than injustice. Evil is a violation of the covenant (Exo. 23:1ff, 6-9). If there is a choice between doing the right thing morally and ethically, or through wrongdoing, in the acquisition of wealth, then the pursuit of justice is always the wiser choice. Justice is demanded by the covenant and is therefore, blessed (Deut. 28:1-1-13). Like most of Proverbs, the standard here is set beyond human senses, having to do with divine retribution.

**9The human heart plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps.**

A continuation of 16:1, with a slight change in the image. The “tongue’s answer” to “his steps.” In other words, the LORD plans the smallest details of man’s life.

**10An oracle is upon the king’s lips, no judgment of his mouth is false.**

This is the first of six verses that are concerned with kingship/leadership. The king/leader was obliged to uphold justice as the court of final appeal. It was he who determined the standard of justice for the land (29:4, 12). The kings across the Near East claim to speak and to determine justice as they had received the laws from their gods (1 Kings 3:3-28). In the New Testament, this can be ascribed to the Law of God: the Good News, the message of the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments,

**11Balance and scales belong to the LORD; every weight in the sack is his concern. [his work].**

God is concern for the details of life. This verse reinforces this notion. The stones, which were carried around in a bag so that they were available to balance scales are identified as “his concern” or “his work.”

**12Wrongdoing is an abomination to kings, for by justice the throne endures.**

The king was looked upon as God’s vice-regent, ruling under the Covenant (Deut.17:18ff). His primary responsibility was to administer justice by condemning the wicked (20:8; 26; 2 Sam.23:3f). If he joined in their evil plots, whether they were financial or legal was to deny his role and break the Covenant (25:5; 29:4; 12, 14). The person of the “king” can be replaced with any man or women in positions of both civil or ecclesial authority/leadership.

**13The king takes delight in honest lips, and whoever speaks what is right he loves.**

The kings who did what was right and just must be surrounded by counselors who will give him wise advice (14:7, 35), and not say things that the king wanted to hear. This verse is actually a warning to kings that they ought to prefer wise advice. Proverbs is also about everyone in need of counsel; thus, this verse is a general warning as well about the source from which the advice or guidance comes.

**14The king’s wrath is a messenger of death, but a wise person can pacify it.**

The king exercised the power of life and death; thus, a wise courtier would be careful not to provoke him, or be able to appease him (20:2; Dan. 2:12-16).

**15A king’s smile means life, and his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.**

The “rain cloud in spring” or “spring rain” was very important because it would not rain again for approximately five months. This rain sustained life throughout the dry summer months. Consequently, the king’s smile was as welcoming as the “spring rain” meaning all was right with the king and his subjects.

**16How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is preferable to silver.**

This verse parallels three verses in the prologue that praise Wisdom as being more valuable than earthly riches (3:14; 8:11; 19; Ecc. 9:16, 18). Although there is no real conflict between wealth and Wisdom, the verse warns that should there be a conflict, it is always better to choose Wisdom over earthly goods.

**17The path of the upright leads away [avoids] from misfortune; those who attend to their way guard their lives.**

The path toward Wisdom demands diligence and discipline. It is important that the student of Wisdom turn away from, “avoids” anything that might distract one from the pursuit of Wisdom. IOW: the false promises of the world often pretend to offer man authentic happiness and life. It is, however, a lie!

**18Pride goes before disaster, and a haughty spirit before a fall.**

Arrogance and a false sense of superiority lead the foolish to ruin. The proud/foolish will not take advice from anyone; thus, they are the cause of their own demise. The only remedy is a life lived in humility that fears the LORD (15:33; 18:12).

**19It is better to be humble with the poor than to share plunder with the proud.**

Like all the “better than” proverbs, this verse weighs a situation’s value by considering it in its entirety. The proud may be wealthy and the humble poor, but humility is better than pride because the proud are confronted with self-inflicted ruin (16:18). The proud also do not realize that “the last will be first and the first last” (Mt. 20:16). This verse also suggests that the wealthy tend to be arrogant and self-important because of what they own and what they have.

**20Whoever ponders a matter will be successful; happy the one who trusts in the LORD!**

Trust in the LORD is the primary prerequisite for the attainment of Wisdom. With Wisdom comes blessings prior to which one must cultivate obedience.

**21The wise of heart is esteemed for discernment, and pleasing speech gains a reputation for learning.**

*The speech of the wise is healing and uplifting as well as encouraging and positive because the wise measure their words prior to speaking; they give thought to how their words will impact others.*

**22Good sense is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly is the training of fools.**

*The wise by the very nature of their pursuit of knowledge and understanding possess the ability to say the right thing, and to promote harmony and justice and peace. The fountain analogy*

**23The heart of the wise makes for eloquent speech, and increases the learning on their lips.**

*The wise know the importance of their words; thus, they think before they speak and they measure the impact of their words. Their counsel, advice and message are attractive and uplifting to their listener (s).*

**24Pleasing words are a honeycomb, sweet to the taste and invigorating to the bones.**

*Words have the power of life and death, therefore, the wise choose them carefully and thoughtfully. Those who want to counsel another or who want to comfort another must think first about the needs of the other and then decide how to address them in an acceptable way. Good news and well-spoken words is like a tonic with which to bless others.*

**25Sometimes a way seems right, but the end of it leads to death!**

*Every decision seems on the surface to be correct when it is made, particularly in the absence of thinking through the consequences. Some courses of action, however, are sinful or foolish; Thus, they lead to ruin even though they seem blameless at the moment.*

**26 The laborer's appetite works for him, for his mouth urges him on.**

*A self-motivated individual works more conscientiously than the person who has to be persuaded or brow-beaten into getting a task completed. Hunger is one of many reasons to work, yet, it is probably the most universal.*

**27Scoundrels are a furnace of evil, and their lips are like a scorching fire.**

*A person who searches for negative info to get on another individual is evil (1 Sam. 2:12; 25:17, 25). Such individuals cannot keep this information to themselves, rather, they must publicize it. Once they do so, the information spreads like a fire out of control. The information does not necessarily have to be grounded on factual data.*

**28Perverse speech sows discord, and talebearing separates bosom friends.**

*Slander is so very sinister that it can destroy the closest relationships especially when someone deliberately gossips in order to spread discord. The point of this verse is knowing how to respond to malicious gossip about another individual and how to evaluate for yourself its authenticity as well as the motive of the one who spreads the gossip.*

**29The violent deceive their neighbors, and lead them into a way that is not good.**

*The way of Wisdom is peaceful, however, the wicked, because they are not good people, are not an example of wise counsel. They hide their purpose with lies so that they can destroy those who trust them. The wicked are self-deceived; thus, they deceive other people because they themselves are already lost. IOW: they are blind guides (Mt. 15:14).*

**30Whoever winks an eye plans perversity; whoever purses the lips does evil.**

*The wink of the eye signifies malice (Ps. 35:19). In this verse, those who close both eyes and lips are condemned as evil planners who work toward malicious ends.*

**31Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by a life that is just.**

*Gray hair deserves honor because if it is true that a long life is the reward of wisdom, then the individual that has gray/white hair must have lived a righteous life.*

**32The patient are better than warriors, and those who rule their temper, better than the conqueror of a city.**

*Patience is a virtue that cannot be taken from a person. It is an internal quality of the wise (14:29). The fool has no patience and often erupts at the slightest perceived inconvenience or setback. "The conqueror of a city" is used as an interesting metaphor. IOW: a city can be captured by a stronger force or power; it also can decay or decline. Not so with the person who has patience; such a person is steadfast.*

**33Into the bag the lot is cast, but from the LORD comes every decision.**

*The events in our life can not be determined ahead of time. Rather, God's will has a way of unfolding before us in accord with God's plan and not our own.*

Blessings for a spiritually prosperous 2023! JNM



**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,

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**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**

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**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**

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**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**

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**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**



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.