

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES OF
ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

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



EASTER SUNDAY



He bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. - Jn 20:5-7

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

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Easter Sunday
March 31, 2024

Mass Intentions for the Week

SATURDAY, March 30 - Vigil – Holy Saturday

8:00pm SVDP + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

SUNDAY, March 31 – Easter Sunday

8:00am OLOP + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

9:00am SB + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

10:00am OLOP + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

11:15am SVDP + Living & Deceased Members of St. Pio

MONDAY, April 1 - Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Maureen Leary Minnick

by Lisa Leary

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

TUESDAY, April 2 – Weekday

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

by Marianne Hall

8:00am SVDP + Mario & Maria Truffa & Tony DiGioia

by Frances

WEDNESDAY, April 3 – Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Reuben & Marion White

by Alyce

8:00am SVDP + Michelina Armellino

by Clancy-Palumbo Funeral Home

THURSDAY, April 4 - Weekday

8:00am OLOP + Anthony Russo

by Marie & Ursula

8:00am ST. B + Carmine DelBasso

by Porto Funeral Home

FRIDAY, April 5 - First Friday

3:00am ST. B + Carmine DelBasso (1st Anniversary)

by Children

SATURDAY, April 6 - First Saturday

8:00am ST. B + Louis Messina

by JoAnn

SATURDAY, April 6 - Vigil – 2nd Sunday of Easter

4:00pm OLOP + Peter & Josephine Perrotto

by Family

4:30pm SVDP + James Sommo, Jr.

by Family

SUNDAY, April 7 – 2nd Sunday of Easter

8:00am OLOP + Filomena Lavorgna

by Husband, Attilio

9:00am SB + Harry DeBenedet

by Law Enforcement Colleagues & Friends

10:00am OLOP + Joseph Ferrucci

by Family

11:15am SVDP + Michael Reede

by Jim & Marie Connors

STEWARDSHIP

March 23 & 24

Regular Collection \$10,987.00

Palm Sunday \$6,563.00

**April 6 & 7 Second Collection:
Monthly**

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

SCRIPTURE READING

Sunday: Acts 10:34a, 37-43/Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 (24)/Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6b-8/Jn 20:1-9 or Mk 16:1-7

Monday: Acts 2:14, 22-33/Ps 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11/Mt 28:8-15

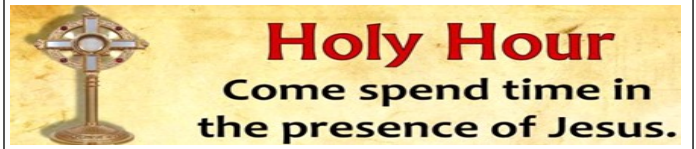
Tuesday: Acts 2:36-41/Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20 and 22/Jn 20:11-18

Wednesday: Acts 3:1-10/Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9/Lk 24:13-35

Thursday: Acts 3:11-26/Ps 8:2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9/Lk 24:35-48

Friday: Acts 4:1-12/Ps 118:1-2, and 4, 22-24, 25-27a/Jn 21:1-14

Saturday: Acts 4:13-21/Ps 118:1 and 14-15ab, 16-18, 19-21/Mk 16:9-15



Every Monday, immediately following morning Mass at Our Lady of Pompeii, there is one hour of **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**.

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.

St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish

Address: 355 Foxon Road, East Haven, CT 06513

Phone Number: (203) 469-0764

Office Hours:

Foxon Road: Mon-Thu 8:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:00;

Fri 8:00-12:00

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

E-Mail: stpioofpietrelcina@gmail.com

Website: stpioofpietrelcinaeh.com

2024 MASSES -

The 2024 Mass Intention Book is opened. There are many weekday Masses left. Kindly have your requests ready when scheduling.


Payment due at time of booking.



EASTER SUNDAY

MINISTRY & EVENT CALENDAR

<p>SUNDAY, MARCH 31 No Events or Activities Scheduled</p>	<p>SUNDAY, APRIL 7 No Events or Activities Scheduled</p>
<p>MONDAY, APRIL 1 Easter Monday - Office Closed Holy Hour - 8:30-9:30am in Our Lady of Pompeii Church</p>	<p>MONDAY, APRIL 8 Holy Hour - 8:30-9:30am in Our Lady of Pompeii Church</p>
<p>TUESDAY, APRIL 2 Bible Study - 7:00pm on Zoom Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>	<p>TUESDAY, APRIL 9 Bible Study - 7:00pm on Zoom Contact Christine Sandford at 203-469-7823 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3 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</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10 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</p>
<p>THURSDAY, APRIL 4 Scriptural Rosary - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>	<p>THURSDAY, APRIL 11 Scriptural Rosary - 6:00pm at OLOP Chapel Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>
<p>FRIDAY, APRIL 5 First Friday Prayer Shawl - 1:00-3:00pm in OLOP LOMR Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>	<p>FRIDAY, APRIL 12 Rosary Group - 8:00 pm on Zoom Contact Sally Mucka at 203-469-0764 ext. 8</p>
<p>SATURDAY, APRIL 6 First Saturday Men's Group - 7:30am-9:00am at SVDP Parish Center</p>	<p>SATURDAY, APRIL 13 Men's Group - 7:30am-9:00am at SVDP Parish Center Divine Mercy Retreat - 9:30am-3:00pm at OLOP Hall</p>



St. Pio of Pietrelcina Ladies' Guild
Military Whist
Friday, May 3, 2023
Doors open at 5:30pm
Games begin at 6:30pm
Our Lady of Pompeii Hall
Tickets: \$12.00
For tickets, call Christine Sandford at 203-468-7823



Join the St. Pio Choir to Sing "The Divine Mercy" April 7th 3:00 pm, the hour of Mercy Our Lady of Pompeii Church

The Novena to the Divine Mercy begins on Good Friday and ends with the feast of the Divine Mercy on the Sunday after Easter.
Refreshments to Follow

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 ~ Ann Murasso (Birthday Remembrance)
by *A Friend*

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Icon ~

Pascal Candle ~ Fr. John Lavorgna

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 ~ James Sommo, Jr. by Family;

Phyllis & George Poole by *Florence & Ernie Perno & Family*

St. Joseph's Altar ~

Pascal Candle ~ Barbara & Maurice Connolly

St. Bernadette Candles

Sanctuary Lamp (Right Side) ~ Vincent Savo by Mom & Dad

Sanctuary Lamp (Left Side) ~

Pascal Candle ~ Harold Donegan

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 Zambrano, Helen Langello, Brian Savo, Gerry Andrea, Alan Poirier, Connie Rasimas, Jane Pyka, Harry Clark, Lou DiNola, Geraldine Licciardi, 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, 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, Christina Meoli, Michelle Smith, Ron Mattei, Angela Riccio, Charlene Tantalò, Al Forgione, Gabriella Garrity, Beverly Fucci, W.D. Merkle, Phyllis Anastasio, Cheryl Barbara, Laura-Phyllis Esposito, Diana Vitelli O'Brien, Meghan Keeney, Gennaro Milone, Jo Vuolo, Felicia DeRoche, Mike Barnett, Richard Costanzo, Carole & Frank Casapulla, 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, Rudolph Pohlman, Linda Esposito, Renee Flynn, The Cooper Family, Lynn Ely, Ethan Roche, Frances Graney, Barbara Kapusta, Megan Maturo, Rose Paula Dziedulonis, Taras Mychajlowskyj, Denise Steiner, Mary Ann Anastasio, Gloribeth R., Stacie Bouchard, Al Sappinetti, Guy Racino, Michael Polaski, Martha Catel, Eddie Villecco, Isaiah Colville, Jennie Nazario, Joan Proto, Caitlin Rustic, Michael Filion, John Torello, Mauro Antonio Bezanilla, Matteo Criscuolo, Robert Filion, Lucy Carbone, Dorene Izzo, Lucille Palange, Carmine Riccitelli, Sr., Louise Amato, Mark Houston, Avery Bye, Alex Bernaitis, Vincent Pisano, Barbara Bellucci, Michael Bulger, Joseph Bonie, Mary Katherine Hart, Billy Carr, Andrea Pepe, Anna Sabatino, Audrey Elder, Theresa Polio, Mike Liso, John Mongillo, Sr., Bill Morrison, Juan & Family, Vern Kelly, Terrence King, Monica Cantore, Fr. Lawrence Boch, Antoinette Comiskey, Diane DiLungo, Frances 'Jean' Massimino, Luca Small, Vincent Savo, Louis Cinque, Alex Dugatto, Kim Vincent-Foschini, Dawn Quartiano Ferraro, Sal DeCola

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 April is the **2nd Monday**, which is **April 8th**. 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, April 8th**. Any questions, please contact Sue at 203-214-1762. 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 Our Lady of Pompeii church **ONLY**. 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 soups, pasta and sauce for the month of April. Please leave your donations of food at the church entrances.

The Food Pantry will be open from 9:00am-11:00am on Saturdays & Tuesdays for East Haven residents.

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 Post Resurrection Church



On this Easter Sunday, my thoughts turn to the late Father John Macquarrie who spoke extensively about the thread between unity and diversity and the extent to which generations before us struggled with some of the same themes that we as a culture continue to grapple with in the 21st century.

Father John Macquarrie was an Episcopal priest and theologian who wrote a book entitled *Christian Unity and Christian Diversity*, an interesting and fascinating book for reflection especially during the Easter Season. Throughout the weeks that follow Easter Sunday, the scriptures describe the development of the early Church, especially the growth of faith among those who made a conscious decision to follow Jesus by the repentance of their sins and by the reception of Baptism.

Fr. Macquarrie makes the point that the Church from its inception has always been characterized by both unity and diversity. Faith in Jesus Christ has been, and continues to be the source and foundation of unity among believers. As the early Church began to organize itself and to develop its doctrine, unity gave rise to diversity and division, not only within individual communities but collectively from one community to another.

Consequently, what appeared to be a unity established by Jesus himself during the first few centuries began to become fragmented. Fr. Macquarrie makes the point that New Testament scholarship has shattered the supposition that there ever existed an original, clear and unified *Deposit of Faith*.

Deposit of Faith

What is meant by a *Deposit of Faith*? The Church has always maintained that Jesus left with his apostles a basic teaching. This teaching or *belief system* had its origin in the Old Testament. We know that much of Jesus' teaching is taken from the Old Testament prophets, advanced by Jesus and made more relevant for the people of his day. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.



Fr. Macquarrie does not deny that a basic teaching was left behind by Jesus, but does agree that this basic teaching throughout the ages has been expanded upon and reinterpreted, without compromising belief in the *Christ Event*. It is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that despite the divisions that have resulted from diversity throughout the ages, the Church has never been reduced to extinction.

As early as the first century, a multitude of interpretations regarding Jesus Christ began to surface among the various Christian communities, in the anticipation of what the early Church thought to be the imminent return of Jesus. The various explanations surrounding the person, mission and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth resulted in conflicting notions as to what one needed as a prerequisite for embracing the New Covenant.

The early Church began deciding who should and should not be counted among the *elect*. The early Church's confession of faith based upon belief in Jesus Christ as Lord has been the foundation upon which the unity of the Church has been preserved throughout the centuries. One's belief in Jesus Christ, actualized through Baptism continues to be that link that unites all Christian churches and is the mark of distinction for the Christian.

Early Church Conflict

The early community of believers struggled with the plurality of conflicting theologies as early as the first century. Suddenly, Baptism and the renunciation of sin were no longer enough. For example, many including St. Paul maintained that converts to Christianity should first be circumcised. Paul maintained that the Greeks like the Jewish converts to Christianity should in fact be circumcised prior to becoming Christians. Peter, however, maintained that it was not necessary for non-Jews to become Jewish or to follow Jewish customs as a prerequisite for becoming a Christian.

"And after there had been much debate, Peter rose and said to them, Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choices among you that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God who knows the heart bore witness to them and gave them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them. Now therefore, why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear" (Acts 15: 7-11).

The Presence of Holy Spirit



As believing Christians, we must not lose sight of the fact that from the very beginning, the *Holy Spirit* was at work in the early Church. Individuals like St. Peter saw himself in the role of defender of the *One True Faith* and of the *One True Body* of believers as it had been intended by Jesus. From the very beginning, the first Christians accepted and incorporated diversity and plurality into what they believed to be the *One Body of Christ*. In doing so, the early Church leaders invoked the powers of the *Holy Spirit* and prayed for guidance and truth.

Unity, together with diversity is actually a vital part of the Church, especially in our twenty-first century world, if the Church is to continue to grow and minister to its people with a level of effectiveness and credibility. Yet, diversity and plurality must not result in the types of divisions that we saw as a result of the Reformation, which occurred 500 hundreds years ago. Father Macquarrie contends that the only meaningful unity in the Church in the twenty-first century will be one that gathers all people together: "All the enriching diversities of the various Christian traditions."

Plurality vs. Diversity

Plurality in the twenty-first century need *not* result in division because plurality can and must strive toward unity. After the Reformation, the Church was splintered and torn apart resulting in divisions that gave rise to denominationalism which gave expression to a new pluralism. The consequence of this new pluralism led to centuries of angry and bitter disputes as battle lines among denominations were drawn in a tireless effort on the part of each to hold fast to their own individual creeds and traditions.

According to Father Macquarrie, the real enemy of diversity is not necessarily division. Rather, it is love-less-ness and bitterness, both of which have characterized the relationships *within* denominations and *among* the different denominations. At the present time, the Catholic Church in America is seeing much anger and bitterness among Catholics whose parish churches are closing and/or merging with nearby parishes as result of changing demographics and diminishing parish census. Instead of viewing such change as an opportunity for strengthening the Catholic presence in a given community and becoming a partnership, Catholics often view these changes as a sense of loss; thus are retaining a *them* against *us* position.

Conservatives vs. Liberals

The Catholic Church also continues to experience tension between conservatives, or more traditional Catholics and liberals, or more progressive members of the flock; both side believing that they are marching under the banner of truth, while the real needs in ministering to God's people go unnoticed and unmet. Father Macquarrie maintains that ecumenism must be directed to *unity*; a unity that is realized among all the Christian churches that espouse to the same belief in Jesus Christ. It must also be a unity that is directed to the betterment of humankind.

The divisions that exist within the Church today result from neither religious nor dogmatic differences. Rather, they are political, economic and cultural in nature. This is threatening the future of the human race and of mainstream religion as we know it. It is precisely to these issues that the various denominations must look to reconcile if real and lasting healing is to occur. We are our brothers' and sisters' keeper whether we choose to recognize this fact or not.

That which is lacking in the Church today is a genuine attempt to evangelize, not necessarily by *hammering* Catholic dogma into the lives of those who are considered to be *un-churched* or *un-saved*, but rather, the ability to meet people where they are at: psychologically, emotionally and spiritually, and to address the actual everyday quandaries that have little to do with dogma, but everything to do with the ability or the desire to follow Jesus Christ.



Programs that help the homeless, the elderly, the unemployed and those who are abandoned by loved ones as a result of pregnancy, AIDS or mental illness are our link to unifying the castaways and bringing the *Good News* to receptive ears. It is only my reconciling humankind that we can hope to unite the different denominations, not by imposing yet another structure, but by incorporating the different theologies under its one founder: Jesus Christ.

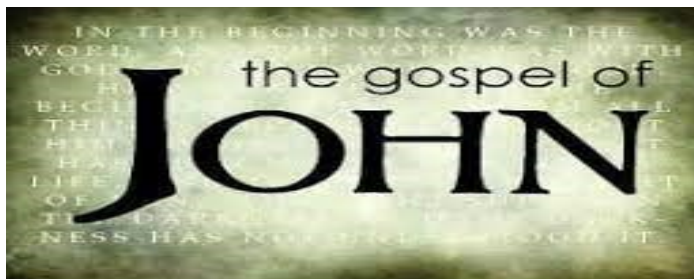
Ecumenical dialogue must strive harder in discovering the wealth of diversity, which has its roots in, and flows from belief in the one God who is the object of worship in all the various denominations. Each church must bring their traditions and their histories to the forefront in order to establish common ground on which positive discussions can develop. It is only by honest and open discussion that truth can and will emerge, but not, however, in an attempt to establish a consensus, but as a means of achieving a hierarchy of common ground in order to arrive at a deeper meaning of the one faith. Too often, positive discussion has ceased when a consensus has been reached; thus the theological quest for deeper meaning has also ceased; thus resulting in the creation of yet another religious bureaucracy that resembles yet another monolithic religion from the past.

In our all too secular twenty-first century world, the new structure for the Church is one that must be *modeled* by the *Blessed Trinity*; a model of church that would neither divide the substance nor compound dissimilarity. For too long, the various denominations have attempted to hold fast to their particular dogmas and traditions at the expense of honest and open dialogue. There needs to emerge a church that would be visibly one, yet a church that allows for the maximum of diversity among its component traditions and individuals. It is only by addressing difference that unity can take root and consequently, most perfectly reflect the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ. **JNM**



From the Pastor's Pen
Reverend Jeremiah N. Murasso, PhD, EdD, PsyD

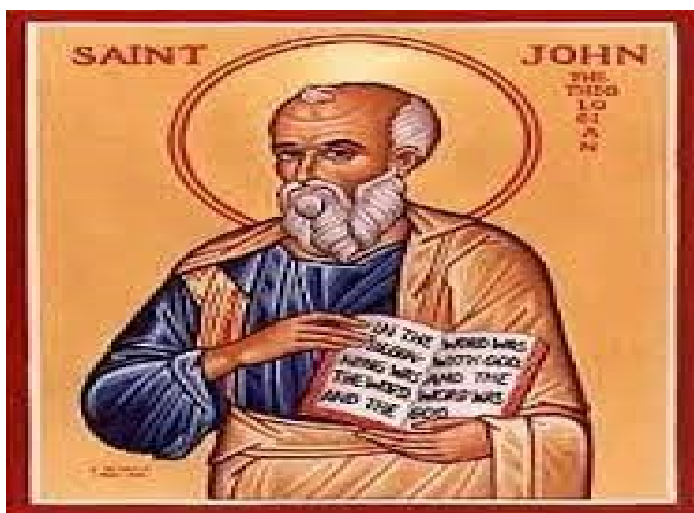
**Gospel According to Saint John:
*The Power & Paradoxes of the Fourth Gospel***



As we begin the *Easter Season*, we leave our year-long journey with Saint Luke and enter the magical world of Saint John and his gospel account. John's gospel account is also referred to as the *Fourth Gospel* and is believed to be the last of the four gospels to be written. Before we begin this brief Easter journey with Saint John and enter into his world, it is important to be introduced to John, his purpose for writing as well as his worldview; a worldview quite different than Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Authorship

Since the early part of the twentieth century, scholars continue to debate the authorship of the *Fourth Gospel*. Although most agree that the account was completed sometime between 80AD and 100AD, the identity of the author continues to be a source of discussion and mystery. Was the author the apostle John or a disciple of John, or was he an eye witness who knew John? Could he in fact be John, the son of Zebedee, who appears to be identified as both the *Beloved Disciple* and the author of the *Fourth Gospel*? In addition to questions about the author, scholars continue to speculate about the identity of the *Beloved Disciple*. Some argue that the *Beloved Disciple* was a minor disciple whose name and origin is virtually unknown. In any case, whoever he was, he appears to have been idealized by the Johannine community having lived during that time in which the members of the community were gathering information about the man, Jesus of Nazareth.

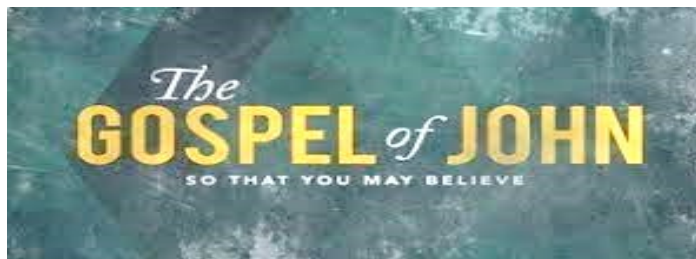


Some scholars maintain that the author of the *Fourth Gospel* could be another John, such as John the Presbyter, or John Mark who was an assistant to Paul. Throughout the centuries there has been much discussion with regard to the person of the *Beloved Disciple* and the probability that he is in fact the author the *Fourth Gospel*. In addition, the question continues to be asked: "Why the anonymity?"

The author appears to be a staunch believer in Jesus. There is no doubt that he believed that Jesus was a prophet sent by God and also was the Incarnate God, the *Christos*, the Messiah of God, who from the opening of the gospel account is and continues to be glorified. Why then, is there such secrecy shrouding the author of the *Fourth Gospel*? Was it out of fear of persecution because of his belief in Jesus that the author was in hiding? Or was it out of embarrassment that the author maintained such a high level of anonymity?

The faceless image of the author who may or may not be the *Beloved Disciple* is meant to have as his face, the man of faith. In other words, it is our face, the face of the believer that must be put in place of the author.

Perhaps, another reason for the continued speculation regarding authorship of the *Fourth Gospel* has something to do with St. John's own statement; a kind of testimony in faith: "This testimony has been given by an eyewitness, and this testimony is true. He tells what he knows is true, so that you may believe" (19:35).



Although some scholars maintain that if the author is someone other than the apostle John or the *Beloved Disciple*, the credibility of the *Fourth Gospel* would be greatly diminished. I do not necessarily agree with this because the *Beloved Disciple* could very well be the authority behind the Johannine tradition, without necessarily being its author. In either case, if neither John nor the *Beloved Disciple* were its author, the credibility of the *Fourth Gospel* would not be diminished.

Whoever he is, one thing is for certain: the author of the *Fourth Gospel* appears to be a tough-minded apologist, a Greek-speaking Jew whose purpose it was to present the words and deeds of Jesus as a means for combating the irreligious and at times unorthodox beliefs held by the Jews, specifically the Pharisees and the Scribes.

Purpose of the Fourth Gospel

St. John's purpose for writing his gospel account can best be summarized in his own words:

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing, you may have life in his name" (20:30-31).

Written "so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Written so that you may have life," says Saint John. This is the reason that the *Fourth Gospel* is referred to as the *Gospel of Life*. It was the hope of the evangelist that by writing about the person and teachings of Jesus Christ as a defense against the criticisms of the day, the world would believe and in believing would receive new Life.



One of the deliberate features of John's gospel account is the author's use of dualism; that is, the contrast between natural water and Living Water, natural life and Eternal Life, darkness and Light, falsehood and Truth and good and evil, to name but a few of the more dominant concepts used by the author. St. John also cites numerous clashes between Jesus and the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees who consistently appear to misunderstand or refuse to understand the words and the actions of Jesus.



Time and time again Jesus is described as chastising the religious leaders of his day, accusing them for being hard-hearted and blinded to the Truth. For Saint John, Jesus is the Truth.

In St. John's account of Jesus' healing of the blind man, for example, the sightedness of the man originally born blind is contrasted with the sightedness of the Pharisees who while in possession of physical sight are unable to see Truth.

"Jesus said, 'I came into the world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.' Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him [Jesus], 'Surely, we are not also blind, are we?'" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' 'so your sin remains'" (9:39-41).

Directing One's Eyes to the Divine

The contrast of opposites and the author's focus on the themes of *Life, Truth, Living Water* and *Light* preoccupy Saint John's thinking, whose purpose it is to direct man's eyes to the *Divine*, to what is *Above*; to a world that will never change, a world where Love and Happiness and Eternal Life await those who *believe* that Jesus is LORD.

Cultural Influences & Gnosticism

Coming from the Greek *gnosis*, (knowledge), Gnosticism represents a variety of religious teachings that were prevalent in the Hellenized Near East during the first century. Gnosticism, primarily a heretical system of thought, claimed to hold the truths with regard to what its proponents believed to be the *hidden reality* of man's salvation. The Christian heresies during the first century, for example, appeared to have been rooted in Gnostic systems of thought. However, by the end of the first century (at the time when the Fourth Gospel was composed, this movement was seemingly Christian.

Greek Philosophy

The author of the *Fourth Gospel* was also notably influenced by Greek philosophy and the notion of what in philosophy is referred to as *ontological dualism*, which describes the contrast or the difference between the mind or soul, which cannot be seen and the physical body, which is considered to be part of the material world.

In the Fourth Gospel, we are constantly introduced to this conflict of opposites in order to reinforce the fact that what is unchanging and not subject to decay or corruption is eternal and everlasting. This is contrasted with the visible world. The Divine or the eternal world is contrasted with that which is subject to change in the visible world where man lives. Accordingly only that which is changeless, and is not subject to the *coming into existence and the passing out of existence* is true and real.

Therefore, the world as we know it is an *imperfect* representation of the *perfect* world as it exists in the eternal domain of the Divine.

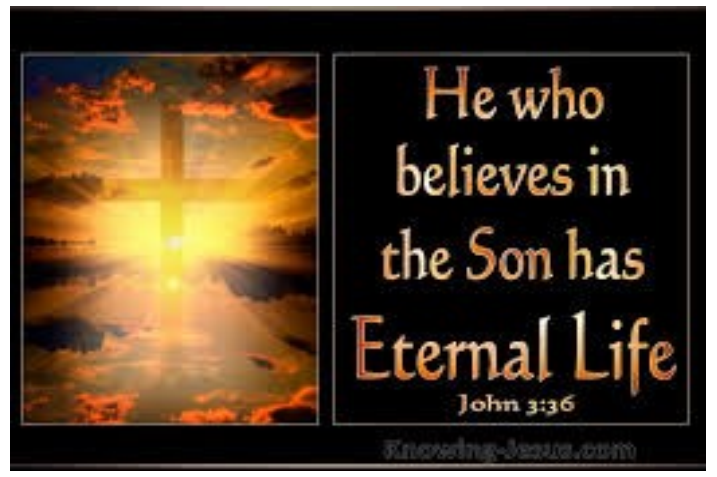
The *Fourth Gospel* portrays Jesus speaking on this metaphysical level in his conversations with potential followers, converts and the Jewish authorities. The evangelist introduces the reader to the polarities that exist between *light and darkness, belief and disbelief, truth and illusion, life and death*. For the evangelist, the individual who believes in Jesus and understands him as being *Truth, True Life, Light of the World and Living Water* is on his way of becoming a disciple. With discipleship comes the mission of bringing the *Good News* into the marketplace. In other words, having had the mountain-top experience of God's presence, the disciple must descend the mountain and bring the *Good News* into the marketplace.



The author of the *Fourth Gospel* describes a world that is consistently indifferent toward and unfriendly to Jesus. The reason that individuals *cannot* or *will not* believe in Jesus lies primarily in their inability or unwillingness to *transcend* the material world and to relinquish the false promises that they hold to be true. For Saint John, the only truth that exists is found in God's Word. Jesus Christ is God's *Word*.

Jesus offers an invitation to his followers to embark upon a journey in faith by *choosing* Light and Life over darkness and death. One does so by identifying one's sinful tendencies, resolving to change these sinful patterns, and then to follow Jesus. This is a journey through the *desert* to the *mountain*; a journey that is repeated and perfected throughout a lifetime.

It is for this reason that Jesus came into the world. He came, not to open man's eyes to his existence, but rather to reveal to mankind, man's sinfulness and then to illicit a response in faith. Such was the invitation that Jesus extends, for example, not only to the Samaritan woman who Jesus meets at the well, but to numerous others, some of whom accept while others decline. Those who decline, according to Saint John remain in darkness.



Just as True Life, Light and Truth are used to signify another *worldliness*; Saint John, also sets up a polarity between the earthly and tangible reality of *bread and water* and the metaphysical and intangible reality of the Divine and the profane. Yet, although the themes of *Living Water* and *Bread of Life* are representative of Jesus and the unchanging reality of the eternal, these are made accessible to everyone who believes.

Bread and water, the two most basic elements of human sustenance are associated with Jesus himself. Jesus reveals himself as the *Bread of Life* (6:35), when addressing the Jews. Food that perishes is contrasted with heavenly food that will result in one's never being hungry again. In Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, he reveals himself as *Living Water* (4:14).

The Journey Begins

Unlike the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the *Fourth Gospel* records few miracles at least where a physical disability is involved. The *Johannine Jesus* teaches his perspective disciples. Through dialogue, Jesus helps individuals overcome the darkness of sin and disbelief and guides them into the Light of Truth. For Saint John, Jesus is that Truth; Truth that provides insight and purpose to one's life.

Upon reflecting on Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well for example, and his revelation to her as *Living Water*, the real miracle is the woman's *acceptance* of Jesus' invitation to embark upon a journey in faith. The Samaritan woman steps out from the darkness of her sinful past into the Light of *Truth*.



Having met Christ she comes to recognize that the world's grip upon her human spirit as well as her *perceived* needs and desires can only be brought into their proper perspective with *Living Water*: real nourishment at the spiritual core. Saint John expects that the true disciple will identify with the Samaritan's woman's journey and like her, follow Jesus in faith.

In Jesus' dialogue with the man born blind, Jesus reveals himself not as *Living Water* but as *Light* that dispels the darkness caused by a lack of belief and a hardened heart. Jesus' healing of the man born blind is not only a story about the miracle of physical sight and the increase of one man's faith; it also serves as an indictment for those who refuse to believe. Such individuals condemn themselves to lives lived in the absence of Light and Truth. Such individuals take their place among the spiritually blind. But this story contains much more.



It is a story of a man born blind, and the extent to which his physical blindness is secondary to his *faith response* and what eventually becomes a rekindling of his human spirit and his ability to see through the eyes of faith. This is also a story about those who really should know Jesus either because of the offices that they hold (i.e., the Pharisees) or because of their relationship to Christ. Yet, it is the unassuming common man who without knowledge of Jesus as God's Son permits his human spirit the luxury of knowing God's Son. That which begins as a physical restoration of sight leads to the seeing through the eyes of faith. Like the Samaritan woman, the blind man was sent back into the marketplace as a disciple, giving witness to the *Truth*; Jesus is the Truth.



As we journey with John for the next several weeks, the author of this beautiful Fourth Gospel invites each of us to re-discover the Spirit of Christ's presence in the depths of our souls and in this re-discovery to begin to bask in Easter joy and to demonstrate this Spirit to all others.

AVAILABLE NOW!

PRINT & DIGITAL AD SPACES

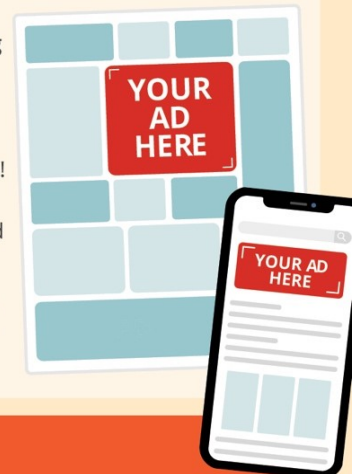
The Support of Your Business is Greatly Appreciated

Robin Ungaro from LPi, our bulletin printer, will be securing new ads for our church in the coming weeks. It is the support of the business community that helps to make our church thrive. Please consider purchasing a print and/or digital ad as your participation makes our bulletin successful, and you attract customers!

Church bulletin advertising

is a cost-effective way to advertise 52 times per year and show support for your local community; in turn, parishioners will support you!

Digital advertising allows your business to be front and center to anyone who visits a church profile page on ParishesOnline.com — that's approximately 500,000 page views per month!



Robin Ungaro
(203) 747-5671
RUngaro@4lpi.com



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

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder affecting 10 to 15 percent of American adults in the United States. However, only half (5 to 7 percent) receive a medical diagnosis and seek medical attention. IBS is the most common disease that gastroenterologists diagnose.



What is irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)?

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a group of symptoms that affect the digestive system. It is not clearly defined as a physical condition. IBS is a common, uncomfortable, gastrointestinal disease or condition that affects the intestines.



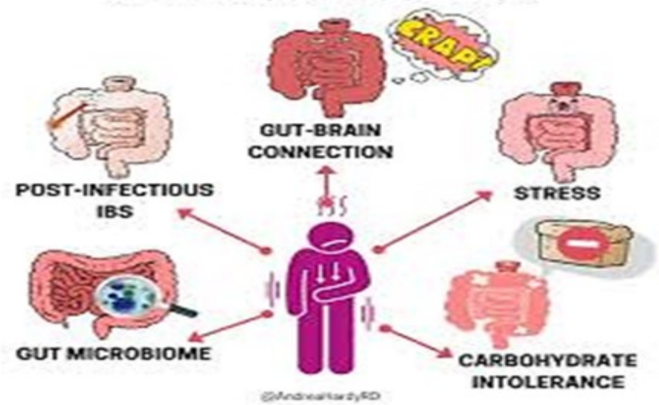
What are the types of IBS?

IBS with constipation (IBS-C): Most of the stool is hard and lumpy.

IBS with diarrhea (IBS-D): Most of the stool is loose and watery. IBS with mixed bowel habits (IBS-M): Both hard and lumpy bowel movements and loose, watery movements.

IBS-U: Undefined and stools are varied (no stool consistency hits the minimum threshold of 25% of all stools). The type of IBS is important because certain treatments only work for specific types of IBS.

What Causes IBS?



What are the causes of IBS?

Scientists do not know exactly what causes IBS, but they classify it as a neuro-gastrointestinal (GI) disorder. These conditions are called disorders of the gut-brain interaction because frequently, there are problems with how the gut and brain coordinate with each other, to help the digestive system work.

Brain-Gut Interaction

Communication challenges between the brain and gut can cause the following:

Dysmotility is a problem with how the GI muscles contract and move food through the GI tract. The colon (large intestine) muscle tends to contract more in people with IBS. These contractions can cause cramps and pain.

Visceral hypersensitivity is found when an individual has extra-sensitive nerves in the GI tract. People with IBS tend to have a lower pain tolerance than people without it. The digestive tract may be super sensitive to abdominal pain or discomfort.

Gut bacteria Research has shown that people with IBS may have altered bacteria in the GI tract, contributing to symptoms. Studies have shown that the types and amounts of gut bacteria are different in people with IBS than in people without it.

Food intolerance Sensitivities or allergies to certain foods may contribute to IBS.

Severe infections Some people may be diagnosed with IBS after a severe infection affecting the GI tract, suggesting germs may play a role.



What are the Symptoms of IBS?

The frequency of symptoms varies from person to person. Symptoms may appear frequently or just during flare-ups.

Signs and symptoms of IBS may include:

- Abdominal pain or cramps, usually related to the urge to defecate.
- Excess gas or bloating.
- Diarrhea, constipation, or alternating between the two.
- Mucus in the stool (may look whitish).
- Feeling an inability to empty the bowels after defecating.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Fatigue and general weakness.
- Mood changes, depression, anxiety.

Risk Factors for IBS

IBS occurs most often in people in their late teens to early 40's. Women are twice as likely to get diagnosed with IBS than men. Other risk factors may include:

- Intolerance to certain foods.
- Severe digestive tract infection.
- History of abuse.
- Diagnosis of anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

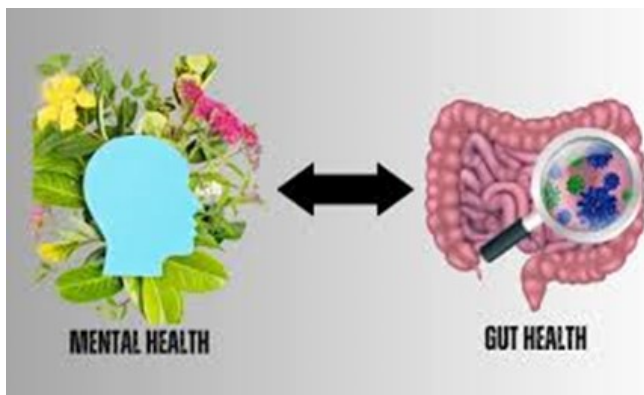
How is IBS Diagnosed?

The doctor may be able to diagnose IBS based solely on symptoms. The doctor may also take one or more of the following steps to rule out other possible causes of symptoms:

- Prescribe adopting a certain eating pattern or avoid specific food groups for a time to rule out any food allergies.
- Order tests to examine the stool sample to rule out infection.
- Order blood tests to check for anemia and rule out celiac disease.
- Order a colonoscopy.

What Triggers IBS Symptoms?

The nervous system controls the automatic movement or motility of the digestive system. This means that stress can affect the nerves of the GI tract; thus, making the digestive system overactive. The colon may be overly responsive to slight disruptions of the digestive system causing symptoms to occur. IBS is affected by the immune system, which is also affected by stress.



Foods that Trigger IBS

Most often people with IBS have certain foods that can trigger a flare-up. Some of the following foods a person with IBS may need to limit or exclude include: beans, foods that contain sorbitol, mannitol, or xylitol, onions, fruits, certain dairy foods, and certain carbohydrate foods.



Treatment of IBS

There is no cure for IBS. But certain things can help to reduce IBS symptoms which include:

- **Changes in eating habits**, which means eating smaller, more frequent meals. Eat a low-FODMAP diet. A low-FODMAP diet reduces certain kinds of carbohydrates that are hard for people to digest. The low-FODMAP diet temporarily restricts certain carbohydrates to relieve uncomfortable symptoms and gives the digestive system a rest.
- **Removing irritants** gives the gut lining a chance to repair itself and can help restore a healthy balance of gut flora. If symptoms improve, a low FODMAP diet is suggested to figure out which foods to eliminate in the future.
- **Avoid gluten** People with IBS and even those without celiac disease tend to be more sensitive to gluten. If a person chooses a gluten-free diet, be sure to work with the healthcare provider to ensure that key vitamins and minerals such as calcium, iron, and fiber are addressed.
- **Drink plenty of water** Drink at least 8 ounces of water a day. Water keeps the GI tract lubricated and can help to reduce constipation.
- **Keep a food diary** The healthcare provider may recommend keeping a journal of daily intake to determine which foods may trigger IBS flare-ups.

Medications

Medications used to treat IBS can include: Dicyclomine, Hyoscyamine, Lubiprostone, Linaclotide, Plecanatide, and Rifaximin. Medications to ease constipation (including fiber supplements and laxatives). Medication to firm stools (antidiarrheals). Medications to help with intestinal spasms. Probiotics, which are good bacteria may help to relieve IBS symptoms.

It is important to **exercise regularly**, aiming for 150 minutes per week. Attempt to raise heart rate with moderate exercise. In addition, try **relaxation techniques**: Yoga and meditation are de-stressing techniques that can help to calm an overtaxed nervous system and nervous gut. Aim at getting **quality sleep**, getting 7 to 9 hours each night. A good night's sleep is a powerful de-stressor.

Living with IBS can be challenging because symptoms are often erratic and come and go throughout a person's lifetime. Treatment often involves trial and error. Changing foods and staying active usually improves symptoms with time. It is important to track flare-ups to help understand the triggers. It can be helpful to see a nutritionist to help make food changes to alleviate flare-ups.

Staying connected to a healthcare provider can be beneficial to improve the management of IBS symptoms and control flare-ups (clevelandclinic.org.). KP

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



Christ is risen! "Alleluia!"

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At the Last Supper which we commemorated on Holy Thursday, Jesus took bread and wine and instituted the Eucharist, instructing the Apostles to "Do This in Memory of Me." (1 Cor. 11:24)

When we come together for the celebration of Mass, we not only experience our unity as living members of the Body of Christ, but we also receive Him — body and blood, soul and divinity — in the Holy Eucharist. This is so, precisely because He is not to be found among the dead, but among the living, and that is our Easter joy.

During this Easter season, we are called to recognize the greatness of His

sacrifice and the incredible gift of life and salvation that He has won for us. The death and resurrection of Christ are the turning point of history and the foundation of our faith. Through His death, He bore the weight of our sins, offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice to reconcile us with God. His resurrection is the victory of life over death, of light over darkness, of good over evil. In His resurrection, we find hope for our own lives, knowing that through, with and in Him we too can find newness of life and the promise of eternity.

Just as the Apostles, seeing the Risen Christ, were moved from despair to

rejoicing, we too are called to let God's love transform our minds and hearts.

My prayer this Easter Season is for all of the members of our Archdiocese to experience the redemptive love of Christ through participation at Sunday Mass. From there we are sent forth to be loving, merciful and charitable toward others, to share the good news of Jesus Christ by joining our voices with those of His first disciples in acclaiming, "The Lord is risen! He is truly risen!"

May the peace of the Risen Christ truly be with you, and may the great joy of Easter fill your hearts and lives in this season and throughout the year. "Alleluia!"

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Leonard P. Blair

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford





**ST. PIO OF PETRELCINA PARISH
MEN'S ACTS RETREAT
April 18, 2024 through April 21, 2024**

**Adoration – GOD'S CALL, YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF,
AND RESPONSE TO GOD.**

Community – LOVE AND CARING FOR EACH OTHER.

**Theology- STUDYING GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND
OUR CATHOLIC FAITH.**

Service – TO GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

What is it?

An ACTS retreat is a three-day, three-night Catholic lay retreat presented by men who have attended prior ACTS retreats, under the guidance of a Catholic Guide. Retreat activities focus on Adoration, Community, Theology and Service. Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church are the guides. The goals are to renew yourself spiritually, to strengthen your faith and its application in your daily life, and to create lasting and supporting friendships. This is done via a positive, lively and interactive manner. Participants return to their parish faith communities with a deeper love for each other and a desire to become more involved.

Interested In Attending?

The retreat begins Thursday evening, April 18, 2024, with a 5:00 pm check-in at St. Vincent dePaul Church Hall on 80 Taylor Avenue, East Haven. At 6:00 pm, participants will then be transported to Our Lady of Calvary Retreat Center in Farmington, CT. for the remainder of the retreat. The retreat will end on Sunday, April 21, 2024, with a 11:15 AM Mass and reception at St. Vincent de Paul Church. Transportation to and from the Retreat Center will be provided. The cost for the retreat is \$330.00. A deposit of \$115.00, made payable to St. Pio of Pietrelcina Church, submitted with the enclosed form, will reserve your place. Also, for first time retreatants who are members of St Pio of Pietrelcina Parish, ACTS CT Chapter will give those first-time retreatants \$100.00 toward the cost of the retreat making the total cost of the retreat \$230.00. The remaining balance will be due on or before April 11, 2024.

Brochures and registration forms can be found at the front entrance of the church.

For further information contact:

Joe Silva, Director
203-915-6087

Email: jjns86@comcast.net

Ron Benzi, Co-Director
203-627-3258

Jose Vega, Co-Director
203-491-6447

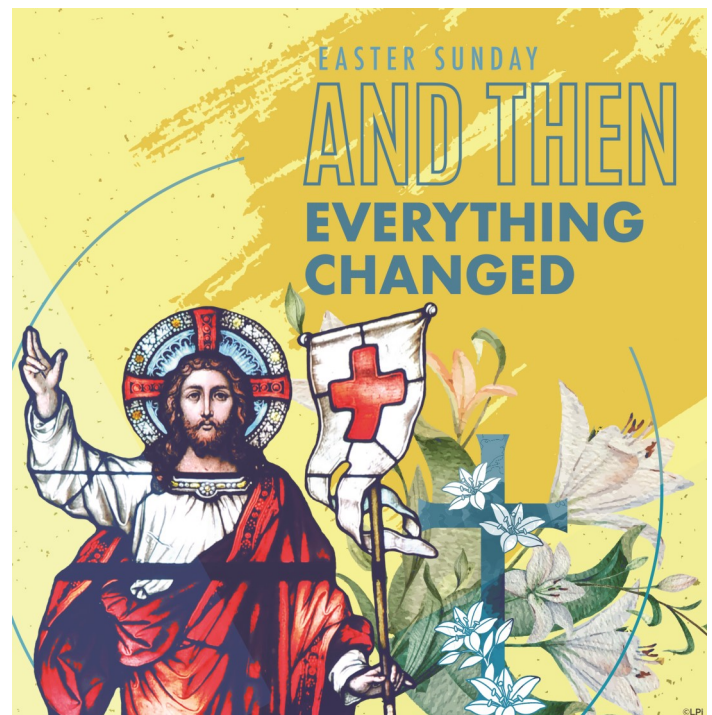
Taras Mychajlowskyj
203-804-4887



Need some tips on how to help your very young child connect with Jesus?

A new ministry for young parents is starting soon!

Learn simple and effective skills to help your young child grow in faith.





Have you recently lost a friend or family member?
Are you having difficulty concentrating and enjoying everyday activities?

For information, please contact Barbara Natarajan at

Rajnet352@comcast.net or
Phone: 713-898-2563



MASS SCHEDULE

HOLY SATURDAY

Easter Vigil

March 30, 2024

8:00pm SVDP: Fr. Murasso

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EASTER SUNDAY

March 31, 2024

8:00am OLOP: Msgr. Shanley

9:00am SB: Fr. Murasso

10:00am OLOP: Msgr. Shanley

11:15am SVDP: Fr. Murasso

***** ***** ***** *****

REMINDER FOR HOLY SATURDAY:

NO 4:00pm VIGIL

NO 4:30pm VIGIL



SHOPPING CARDS *STILL* NEEDED

With the food prices continue to rise, several of our parishioners are having trouble buying food as they *struggle* to purchase other household necessities and pay for rent and utilities.

Grocery Shopping cards in any denomination to any of the local supermarkets would help me help members of our parish family, who are 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



Online Giving

A growing number of parishioners are taking advantage of our online giving option, signing up for everything from ongoing weekly offerings to gifts for Christmas flowers. You may make a one-time gift or sign up for recurring donations. Visit <https://stpioofpietrelcinaeh.com/> and click on the 'Give' button for online giving and account registration. Contact the Parish Office with any questions.

OFFICE CLOSING

EASTER MONDAY, April 1