

Our Lady of Good Counsel

137 West Upper Ferry Road West Trenton, New Jersey 08628

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 18, 2016

Fr. Michael Hall, Administrator
Msgr. James G. Innocenzi, in Residence
Deacon John Bonner
Deacon Steven Szmuto
Brenda O'Callaghan, CRE

Parish Ministries & Services

PARISH RECTORY & OFFICE 609 882 3277
Office Hours: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Fax: 609 882 4375
Monday thru Friday Website: olgcc.net
E-mail: olgcc@comcast.net

MASSES Weekdays:
Monday thru Friday 7:30 AM
Saturday 8:00 AM
Weekends:
Saturday Vigil 5:00 PM
Sunday 8:30 AM & 10:30 AM
Holy Days: 7:30 AM, Noon, & 7:00 PM

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Brenda O'Callaghan, CRE 883 9005
E-mail: religiouseducation.olgc@comcast.net

RECONCILIATION Saturdays, 4:00 to 4:30 PM

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
Deacon John 771 8288
Rosalie Brenna 883 1792

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT Mondays, 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM

ADULT FAITH FORMATION
Deacon Steve 947 0587

INFANT BAPTISM Baptisms are celebrated on Sundays at Noon with prior arrangements made at least three months in advance with the Infant Baptism Ministry. Parents are required to attend a parish preparation program. Godparents must be practicing Catholics in good standing with their local parish. See the ministry brochure in parish Literature Racks.

CONSOLATION MINISTRY
Deacon John 771 8288

MARRIAGES Arrangements should be made at least one year in advance. Couples are required to participate in a parish marriage preparation program and to attend a pre-marital conference sponsored by the Diocese. Weddings must be scheduled before 2:00 PM on Saturdays.

HOMEBOUND OUTREACH
Rectory Office 882 3277

MINISTRY TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND To arrange for the spiritual needs of the homebound or sick, contact the Rectory Office and see the ministry brochure in parish Literature Racks. Urgent sick calls at any time.

INFANT BAPTISM
Mary Szmuto 847 0796

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
Michael Murphy, Grand Knight 575 7699
Gary Vanderbilt, Church Director 882 8474

LITURGICAL MINISTERS
Rectory Office 882 3277

MUSIC MINISTRY
Deirdre Hindley, Organist 882 3215

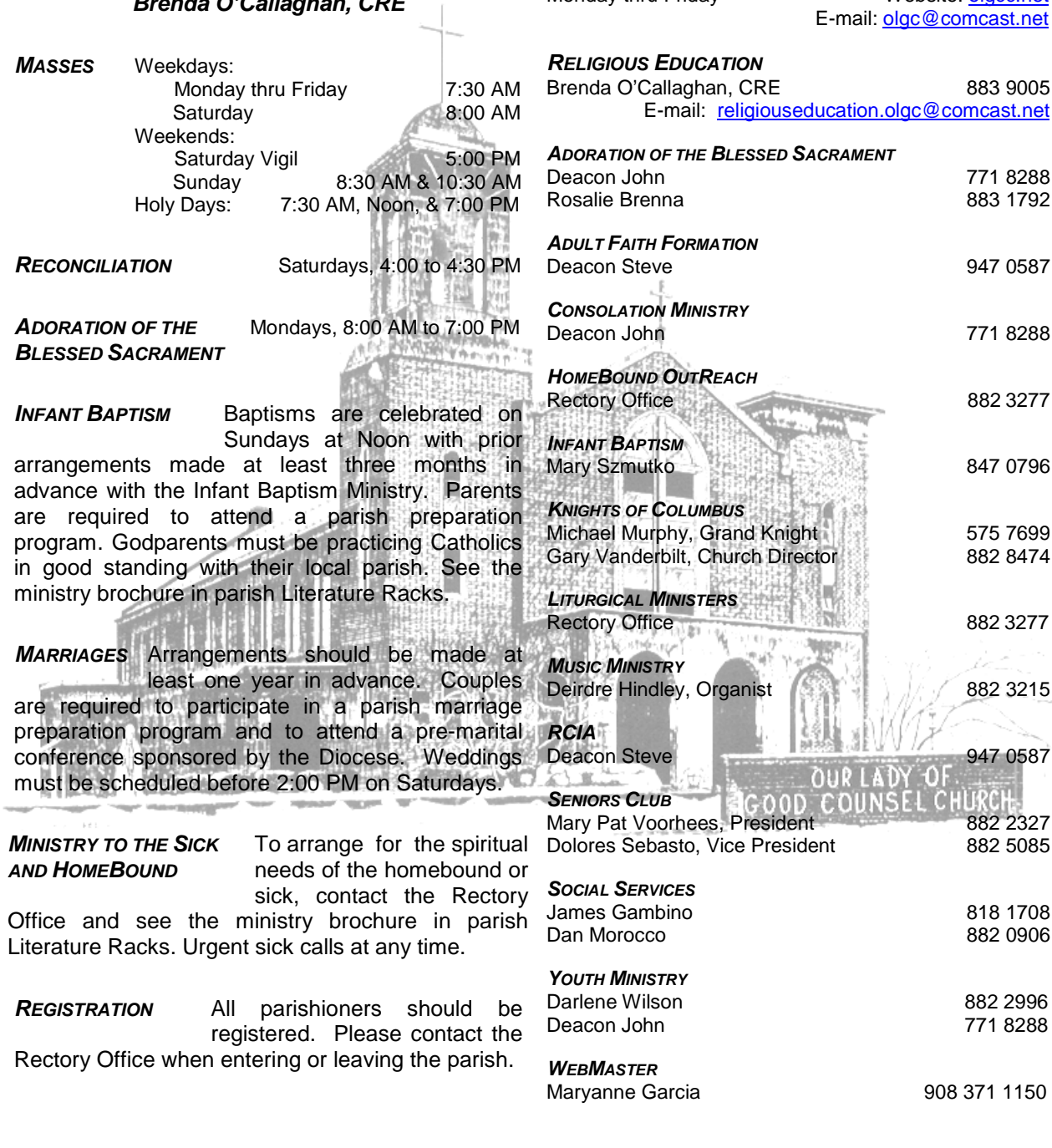
RCIA
Deacon Steve 947 0587

SENIORS CLUB
Mary Pat Voorhees, President 882 2327
Dolores Sebasto, Vice President 882 5085

SOCIAL SERVICES
James Gambino 818 1708
Dan Morocco 882 0906

YOUTH MINISTRY
Darlene Wilson 882 2996
Deacon John 771 8288

WEBMASTER
Maryanne Garcia 908 371 1150



Schedule for the Week

MASSES & SERVICES

8:00 AM Special Intention
 5:00 PM People of the Parish
 Daniel DeFrancesco r/o Mary DeFrancesco
Sunday, December 18th
4th Sunday of Advent

8:30 AM John Lally r/o Laurie & Rudy Esteves
 Paola Travaglini r/o DiMascio Family
 10:30 AM Nicholas Muscente, Sr. r/o Marie & Carol
 Muscente
 Helen Thompson r/o Czelusniak Family
 4:00 PM *Christmas Penance Service*
Monday, December 19th
 For the Intentions of Terry Drew r/o Harry &
 Sherry Masterson & Family
Tuesday, December 20th
 7:30 AM Catherine Cooper r/o Don & JoAnne Jones
Wednesday, December 21st
 7:30 AM Vincent Kraemer r/o Elaine Palatine
Thursday, December 22nd
 7:30 AM Gloria Buttaci r/o Norman Buttaci
Friday, December 23rd
 7:30 AM Msgr. William F. Fitzgerald r/o Sr. Marian William
 For the Intentions of Janet McMyne & Children r/o
 Family
Saturday, December 24th
The Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord
 There is no morning Mass.
 5:00 PM Special Intention
 Gloria Buttaci r/o Norman Buttaci
 9:00 PM People of the Parish
 Stephen Schragger r/o Mary Ellen Schragger
Sunday, December 25th
The Nativity of the Lord
 8:30 AM Lar & Antonio DeLillis r/o Family
 Anne Rita Newell r/o Family
 10:30 AM John Lally r/o Pam & Steve Roman
 Al Venanzi r/o Family

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

Friday, December 23rd, Home visits arranged.
Saturday, December 24th
 5:00 PM Joyce Christensen & Joan Fallon
 9:00 PM Mary Szmuto
Sunday, December 25th
 8:30 AM Mary Serafine
 10:00 AM *Preferred Care Visits: Anna Adomaitis*
 10:30 AM Fran Golinski & Claude LeGall
Monday, December 26th. Adoration is cancelled.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Registered Parishioners	767 families
Parishioners using envelopes	276
Envelope Contributions	\$5,626.00
Average Contribution	\$20.38
Loose Cash	\$636.00
Contributions for December 11 th	\$6,262.00

READERS

Saturday, December 24th
 5:00 PM Helen Marie Dolton
 9:00 PM Carol Lake
Sunday, December 25th
 8:30 AM Laura Shea
 10:30 AM Mary Anne LeGall

ALTAR SERVERS

Saturday, December 24th
 5:00 PM Lauren & Marcus Christensen
Sunday, December 25th
 8:30 AM Nora Shea
 10:30 AM Alex Medwick

PARISH EVENTS

December 17th: Morning Mass takes place at 8:00 AM. Novenas follow morning Mass.

Reconciliation will take place at 4:00 PM.

December 18th: *4th Sunday of Advent*

There are no Sunday Religious ED Classes.

A *Christmas Penance Service* will take place beginning at 4:00 PM. Several Priests will be available.

December 19th: *Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament* is cancelled.

There are no Religious ED Classes.

December 20th: The Knights of Columbus Council 3756 will hold a members only meeting in the Church Hall at 7:30 PM.

December 21st: *Catholic Preschool* will meet in the Church Hall from 9:00 AM to Noon.

December 24th: There is no morning Mass or Novenas. There is no afternoon Reconciliation.

The Masses for the *Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord* will be celebrated at 5:00 and 9:00 PM.

December 25th: *The Nativity of the Lord*

There are no Sunday Religious ED Classes.

MIDNIGHT MASS AT THE CROSSING

It was around 11PM on a cold Christmas eve in 1776, that General George Washington and his troops began the historic crossing of the Delaware at McConkey's and Johnson's Ferries, moving on to surprise the Hessians in Trenton early Christmas morning. This victory raised the hopes of the American Colonists.

The Church of Saint George on the New Jersey side of Washington's Crossing invites you to join in celebrating Midnight Mass on Christmas just north of the actual crossing sight. Christmas Carols will be sung before Mass and music will be provided by the St. George Choir. If you are looking for something different for you and your family this Christmas Eve, this may be just the thing. All are welcome.

Announcements

PARISH NEWS

Catholic Preschool & Playdates This Catholic ministry is geared towards parents and caregivers and their young children. This ministry will hold weekly meetings on Wednesday mornings in the Church Hall from 9:00 AM to Noon with prayer, craft, snacks, and open play time with toys or games, excepting the 1st Wednesday of each month which will be a field trip with no meeting in the Church Hall.

This ministry is open to all who would want to participate: there are no dues; parents or care-givers must stay with their children; it is not a day-care, drop-off style group. Right now, there are about five moms and their children who will participate. For information, contact Michele Solomon at 731 1694.

Pilgrimage to Fatima & Lourdes Fr. John Garret extends an invitation to join a pilgrimage to Fatima and Lourdes from October 7th to October 17th. For complete details join those attending the pilgrimage at the Parish of the Resurrection on January 26th at 7:00 in Delran. Contact Graycar Travel at 800 214 6723 for information and specifics.

New Jersey Adoption Law Change Beginning January 1st, adoptees and certain relatives will be able to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate without a court order. The birth certificate will include the names of the birth parents who placed children for adoption unless a birth parent requests their name be omitted.

Birth parents who wish to preserve their privacy must submit a *Redaction Request Form* to the New Jersey Department of Health no later than December 31st of this year: this *Request Form* can be obtained by calling 866 649 8726, X582.

The Catholic Church has always supported reunions between adoptees and birth parents if such unions are by mutual consent. The Church continues to do so through their Catholic Charities agencies. If you are aware of someone who would be affected by these adoption law changes, suggest that they call a free helpline at 989 4809.

Holy Land Christian Art Olive wood carvings from the Holy Land will be available for purchase in the Church Hall on the weekend of January 21st and 22nd. Olive wood carvings have evolved as a cultural tradition over the centuries and is dedicated to supporting the Christian community in the holy land.

*Drop down dew from above, you heavens,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;
let the earth be opened and bring forth a Savior.*

THE GREATNESS OF MARY

In this week's Gospel, in a dream, God tells Joseph to marry Mary, even though Joseph had discovered she was pregnant.

According to Jewish law, premarital sex is punishable by death; and, in the ordinary course of things, pregnancy doesn't occur without sex. So, Mary's pregnancy out of wedlock exposes her to the penalty of death. Even apart from legal penalties, Mary's pregnancy jeopardizes her flourishing. As Joseph's own attitude shows, in Mary's society, no one wants to marry a woman who looks like a sinful woman and has an illegitimate child to support. It is clear, then, that Mary's pregnancy exposes her not only to legal penalties but also to suffering and shame in her society.

It is noteworthy, too, that Joseph needs to hear from God himself that God, and no man, is the Father of Mary's child. Presumably, Joseph had already asked Mary how she came to be pregnant, and Joseph didn't believe her when she told him. That's why God had to confirm Mary's story for Joseph.

How shaming for Mary to be thought a little liar as well as a sinful woman! Why would God put Mary through this? As the reading from Isaiah indicates, it helps us to recognize Jesus as Emmanuel — God with us — to know that Jesus did not have a human father; and we are helped towards that view by knowing that Mary was pregnant before she was married.

But why didn't God protect Mary from the shame and suffering of being an unmarried pregnant woman by having the conception of Jesus result from some great public miracle involving Mary, so that everyone knows Mary's pregnancy stems only from the miraculous workings of divine power? God doesn't have to expose Mary to humiliation to make her pregnant, does he?

Well, here's one way to think about the matter. Mary's steadfastness and trust in God even in the trouble of being an unmarried pregnant woman are a training for her and a sign for us, aren't they? Mary will eventually find the greatness of soul to love God and her son at the foot of the cross, in the shame of having her son die a shaming death. And, from watching Mary standing by the cross, we learn that human greatness has at its core fidelity through shame and suffering, don't we?

And so the greatness of Christ on the cross is fore-shadowed by the greatness of this small woman, pregnant, shamed, and faithful.

*Eleanore Stump
Professor of Philosophy, SLU*

Reflection

4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Francisco Goya, *Joseph's Dream*, 1772.

***Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid
to take Mary your wife into your home.***

***For it is through the Holy Spirit
that this child has been conceived in her.***

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying:
*Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God;
let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!*

But Ahaz answered,
I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!

Then Isaiah said:
Listen, O house of David!

*Is it not enough for you to weary people,
must you also weary my God?*

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign:
the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel.*

IS 7

The time grows short. The fulfillment of prophecy is nigh at hand. In just a few short days, we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord. We are, so to speak, in the home stretch as we prepare for the celebration of the Birth of the Savior. As we heard in the Responsorial Psalm: *The LORD's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it on the rivers.*

When I was a child, as do all children, I thought that the days between Thanksgiving and Christmas, were an eternity. Then, it was all about the presents to be found under the tree on Christmas morning. Today, as parents and grandparents, it seems as if Christmas comes too fast; there is never enough time to prepare. There is so much to do before from a secular perspective, and yet, there is even more to do from a spiritual perspective. At its deepest level, Christmas is not about presents, but rather presence — the eternal presence of God. Christmas itself is the ultimate gift of love — the coming of the Eternal Word of God, the only-begotten son, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

Hans Urs von Balthazar, a Swiss theologian and priest, who was one of the most impactful Catholic theologians of the 20th century, once said, *Christmas is not an event within history but is rather the invasion of time by eternity.* Indeed, the coming of Jesus marks the central point of humanity when an all-powerful and all-loving Father and Creator fulfilled his promise of salvation and reconciliation through the gift of His Son to restore that which was lost through original sin.

In today's Gospel, Matthew recounts the birth of Jesus, and recalls the words of the Prophet Isaiah as heard in the first reading: *Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us.* God fulfilled his promise of a Messiah, not in the form of a powerful conqueror, but rather in the infant Jesus who, although divine, would grow in humanity from the essence of humility under the guidance and protection of an earthly family. Joseph, betrothed to Mary, who was with child through the Holy Spirit, was told by the angel of the Lord: *Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*

As we enter the final days of Advent, let us pray and reflect on the great gift that we have been given, the gift of Jesus Christ — fully divine and fully human — who came to save us from our sins and reconcile us to Our Heavenly Father. Let us embrace the Lord in our hearts through his word and especially through the sharing of His Precious Body and Blood, the Holy Eucharist, by which he remains present to us always, as we turn to him in prayers of adoration and gratitude.

Deacon Steven Szmuto

***Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;
and his name will be called Emmanuel.***

Announcements