

First Sunday in Advent



Saturday, December 2:

5:00 Patrick Jordan (Living, 92nd Birthday)

Sunday, December 3:

7:00 Benjamin Zarrelli  
9:00 Xeu Qian Zheng  
11:00 People of the Parish  
1:00 Niall James Sullivan  
5:00 Daniel Blaine

Monday, December 4:

7:00 Joan Fulton  
9:00 Robert Cooney

Tuesday, December 5:

7:00 Ricardo Montierde  
9:00 Kenneth Thatcher

Wednesday, December 6:

7:00 Domiano Gilardi  
9:00 Eugene Spillane

Thursday, December 7:

7:00 Michael McKee  
9:00 Sheilah & Ricardo Capon  
7:00 People of the Parish

Friday, December 8:

7:00 Marie D. Carnegie  
9:00 Dawn Walsh  
7:00 Thomas Walsh

Saturday, December 9:

9:00 Maureen F. McDonough  
5:00 Bud Rosso

Sunday, December 10:

7:00 Fr. Paul Gyamfi  
9:00 Al & Sue Amore  
11:00 People of the Parish  
1:00 Charles M, Mary & Charles Donohue  
5:00 James McVey

Saturday, December 9:

5:00 Mary Rosso

Barbara Kelly

Sunday, December 10:

7:00 Vincent O'Grady  
9:00 Donald O'Shea  
11:00 Maria Montouri  
1:00 Pat Jezycki  
5:00 Jack Gordon

Evelyn Bilotto  
Regina Torello  
Rosetta Messina  
Efrain Ortiz



Susan Pellecchia, Lois Mazzitelli, Rosanne Mezzacappa, Christopher Luciano, Patricia Repoli, Tim Campagna, Meghan Clark, Alberto Meranda, Jerry Russo, Anna Parente, James Parente, Ruth Manieri, Mary Kenny, John C. Marino, Michael Rucci, Cpl Justin Campbell, Barbara Brennan, Sam Pezzano, Sheila Jones, Edward B. Hanson, Robert Gaylord, Emily Baron, Frank Silvestri, Carol Van Manen, Frank Juliano, Richard Nagrowski, Theresa Mirante, Barbara Walsh, Christian Pepo, Terrence Gibbons, Jean Forte, JoAnn DiPietro, Robert Williams, Sebastian Lattuga, Linda Browne, Frances Nodar, Tina Russo, Nathaniel Sasha, Kathryn Capofari, Rosemary Regan, Anthony Umana, Barbara Rotondo, Carmela D'Angelo, Mark Herman, Arthur Schmitt Sr., Richard Christie, Anthony Columbo, Frances Bocignone, Roseanne Viano, Barbara Longo, Linda Powers, Crystal Helewa, Eleanor Cooper, Daniel Juliano, Lizabeth Walsh, Joseph DeMeo, Moira Mackey

Collections:

November 19th.....\$7,125.00  
Catholic Charities.....\$1,573.00  
November 26th.....\$7,000.00  
November 2017 Budget Deficit.....\$966.00  
Congratulations to M/M William Jones on winning  
The November 2017 50/50

The Bread, Wine and Sanctuary Candle are offered in the loving memory of Frank & Mary Santora by their daughter Rosetta Messina

## NOTE FROM THE PASTOR:

Dear Parishioners:

Father Vincent was a young priest in the first years of the seventeenth century. One day he was sailing in a ship in the Mediterranean Sea when three Turkish vessels, filled with pirates, pursued them. After a fervent fight, in which all the men on Vincent's ship were either killed or wounded, the French ship was captured and brought to Tunis in North Africa. The Turks fastened chains around the necks of the prisoners and marched them to the marketplace, where they were exhibited for sale as slaves. They were carefully inspected by the dealers, who looked at their teeth, felt their muscles, made them run and walk, with loads and without, to determine if they were in good condition. Then the men were put up for sale.

Father Vincent was eventually sold to a Frenchman who had abandoned the Catholic faith for the Mohammedan religion. This man had three wives who were very kind to the poor priest. One of them would go out to the fields where Vincent was working and ask him questions about France and about the Church. His answers seemed to impress her profoundly, and one day she asked him to sing to her one of the songs that Frenchmen would sing in praise of their God. The request brought tears to Vincent's eyes. He thought of the Israelites who were enslaved in Babylon in the sixth century B.C, and of their answer to a similar demand by their pagan captors. With an aching heart he intoned Psalm 137:

*By the rivers of Babylon there we sat weeping when we remembered Zion. On the poplars in its midst we hung up our harps. For there our captors asked us for the words of a song; our tormentors, for joy: "Sing for us a song of Zion!" But how could we sing a song of the LORD in a foreign land?*

Father Vincent sang other Catholic hymns at her request, including the "Hail, Holy Queen." That night the woman spoke to her husband and said to him, "There is something wonderful in that religion." Her words penetrated her husband's heart and stirred something within him. With the invisible and mysterious aid of God's grace he would eventually renounce Islam and leave Tunis secretly, with Vincent at his side. The two escaped the grip of the Sultan and made their way to France. The apostate returned to the true religion in his native land. Fr. Vincent continued his priestly journey in life and did great things for the Lord. His full name is Saint Vincent de Paul. Whenever Islam is in the news today it is usually connected to a sad story about terrorism. Recently, I read a blog on the internet that featured Islam, and, yes, terrorism was mentioned, but the story was rather upbeat.

(Patti Armstrong, "Muslims Are Converting to Christianity in Record Numbers. How are so many conversions taking place in oppressive countries where proselytizing can bring a death sentence?" *National Catholic Register*, 17 November 2017.) Father Mitch Pacwa was interviewed for the article. He is considered an expert on the Middle East. He claims that we are in a time of the first ever mass conversions of Muslims to Christianity. Consequently, Islamic leaders are frightened and are using terror to discourage defections. But this has produced the unintended result that more and more Muslims are growing disgusted with Islam. The violence of Islamic terrorists has made for bad PR, according to Pacwa. For instance, he quoted someone on African TV saying, "Al-Qaida attacks Americans by blowing up our embassies but we Africans are the ones that die in the attacks." Pacwa suspects that Islam is at the beginning of a collapse, likening increased terrorism to the supernova stage where stars burn brightest just before they burn out. However, it is not easy to leave the Muslim religion. Pacwa gave recent examples of brutal retribution for rejecting Islam. "Not long ago I read about a boy who was a slave that snuck out to pray on Good Friday and was crucified for it," he said. "I also heard about two Filipino maids that were caught with the New Testament and beheaded." Yet, despite such risks, Pacwa said that mass conversions are happening even in very fundamentalist countries.

How are so many conversions taking place in oppressive countries where proselytizing can bring a death sentence? "A large number of Muslims are receiving visions of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary that has led them to convert," Pacwa said. "Many of these stories can be seen online." Another big source of conversions, according to Father Pacwa, is through Father Peter (Butros) Zakariam, a Coptic priest exiled from Egypt. He does a TV show every Friday, which is broadcast to 60 million Arabs, and a six-hour internet discussion show every Tuesday and Thursday. There are also many videos on the internet of him boldly proclaiming Christianity and denouncing Islam. Father Peter is known as "the most wanted man in the Muslim world." Pacwa explains, "The Muslims have a price on his head—\$60 million. He's in hiding but moves around. He keeps producing these TV shows and attacks Islam because he is brilliant in his knowledge of the Quran and he is fearless."

It seems that more and more Muslims today are finding out what we Catholics have known for two thousand years: there is something wonderful in our religion. Something? Better to say, "Someone"—Jesus, the light of the world, the hope of humanity.

God Bless You!

Father Eric

**Sacred Heart 2017-2018:** If you and your spouse are considering a Private/Catholic school for your children, Sacred Heart is the perfect choice. Sacred Heart School is a West Brighton fixture with a rich history of academic and athletic success. The school currently has an enrollment of 278 students all of who are inspired and educated in the image of God. One hundred percent of our 8th grade graduates are accepted into their high school of choice. Many of our students are awarded high school scholarships, are accepted into advanced/specialized programs and our school has among the highest ELA and Math scores on Staten Island. We place emphasis on technology in the classrooms as our kindergarten—eight grade students have Chromebooks in the classroom. Homework assignments, upcoming events and school news are posted on our school website. Also our basketball, soccer, swimming and golf teams are not only competitive, they win! Sacred Heart also has a Junior National Honor Society as well as drama, art and chess clubs. In addition we offer a free Pre-K and financial assistance is available to students from K-8th grade. If you are interested please contact the school at (718) 442-0347, private tours are available.

**St. Monica's Guild:** The Saint Monica's Guild Mother's Association will be having a ladies night out at The Staaten on Thursday December 7th from 7-11 PM. There will be food, drink, music and raffles and the cost is \$60 per person. Please see fliers in the vestibule if you are interested in attending.

### **ALTAR SERVER SCHEDULE**

**Saturday, December 9, 2017:**

5:00 : A. Basile, C. Basile, M. Donovan

**Sunday, December 10, 2017:**

7:00 Ann, Siobhan & Kathleen McCafferty

9:00 Matthew, Sean & Julia Ahern

11:00 W. Hollnsteiner, E. Eadicco, A. Cardone

1:00 Kasey, Kelly & Erik Shashaty

5:00 J. Torres, J. Oliveras, B. Daniels

### **St. Joseph Retreat Center Fall Programs**

(St. Joseph Hill Academy)

**Centering Prayer Group:** Wednesday December 13th, 7 :30-9:30 PM, fee \$10 per session, facilitated by Ann Louise DePalo. All are invited to come and be still and pray in God's presence.

**Meditation Monday:** Monday, December 11th, 7 :30-9:30 PM, fee \$20 per session, facilitated by Grace Daquila. An invitation to come and be refreshed, renewed and restored with faith sharing, prayer and reflection. Journey with others and experience a deeper, exciting relationship with our Lord.

The retreat house is located on the grounds of St. Joseph Hill Academy at 850 Hylan Blvd. To reserve a seat or for more information contact Ronnie Keane at (718) 720-1097 or visit [SJRetreatCenter.org](http://SJRetreatCenter.org)

**Xavier Society for the Blind:** The Xavier Society for the Blind was founded in 1900 to assist blind and visually impaired people learn about, develop and practice their Catholic faith. The society serves over 1700 hundred people and provides reading materials in both audio and Braille formats. These include monthly readings, prayers and responses for both Sunday Masses and selected feast days, faith formation textbooks for both children and adults and many popular titles in the Catholic Church. If you are someone you know could benefit from our services please call us at (212) 502-7655 or visit our website at [www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org](http://www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org)

**Online Giving:** Do you know that Sacred Heart now offers online giving which makes donating quick and easy. This is perfect for our parishioners who take frequent vacations, have a busy weekend schedule or have moved but wish to continue their support of our parish. Just go to the Sacred Heart website, [www.sacredheartsi.org](http://www.sacredheartsi.org) and click on the link at the top of the page. Also kindly remember Sacred Heart Church in all your estate and will planning.

**Sacred Heart Rectory Office Hours:** Please make a note that the Rectory now has new office hours. The Office will now be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 AM-9PM and on Saturday and Sunday from 10 AM-6 PM. Tuesday and Thursday the office will be open only from 9 AM- 5 PM.

## **SACRED HEART PARISH GROUPS**

**Bible Study:** Our Pastor, Fr. Eric has a weekly bible study group which meets on Saturdays from 1-2 PM in the school's small cafeteria. During the hour The Rosary is recited, Father gives a short bible lecture and there is a brief group discussion. All parishioners are encouraged and welcome to attend.

**Altar Servers:** We are always looking for new boys and girls to become altar servers. If you are in the fifth grade or older, are a practicing Catholic and have received your first Holy Communion you can join. If anyone is interested please contact the Rectory at (718) 442-0058 or simply ask Fr. Eric after Mass. Being a server not only increases one's spiritual experience at Mass but also is a great way to get involved in the parish.

**Sacred Heart Youth Group:** Sacred Heart currently has a Youth Group for children in grades 6-12. If your child is interested in joining or if you have any questions contact Maria Montouri at (347) 247-2930. The group meets every first and third Monday of the month in the school cafeteria at 7 PM. There is free pizza, drinks and snacks for all who attend the meetings. The group does service projects like clothing and coat drives, eyeglass drives and bake sales as well as fun social activities like movie nights, bowling and laser tag! Also, any student who is currently in need of community service hours can join for an easy way get hours and have some fun at the same time.

**Legion of Mary:** The Sacred Heart chapter of the Legion of Mary meets weekly (if possible) on Wednesday's at 6:30 PM in the rectory. The meeting lasts roughly one hour and the members pray The Rosary and offer assistance to the Pastor. If you are interested please call Patti Foley at (718) 983-5416. All are welcome

and thanks to all who support The Legion of Mary.

**Sacred Heart Choir:** The Adult Choir sings on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, rehearsals take place at 10:15 AM the Sunday you are scheduled to sing. If any new members who can carry a tune wish to join they do so by simply showing up. Being a member of the choir is a great way to enhance your spiritual experience at Mass. Remember he who sings prays twice!

**Youth Activities Council:** The Sacred Heart Youth Activities Council is a parish men's club that meets (schedule permitting) on the first Friday evening of the month. Coaches of the various sports teams attend and give an update on recent and upcoming events. Various fundraisers that not only benefit the teams but also the school are planned and discussed. Even if your child has already graduated from the school, you are still encouraged to attend and enjoy the camaraderie. The meeting lasts usually for an hour and afterwards refreshments are served.

**Holy Name:** The Sacred Heart Holy Name Society will be having its initial meeting on Sunday, December 3rd at 6:15 in the school cafeteria. The guest speaker that evening will be John Bonviaggio. All men of the parish are encouraged to attend this meeting and become a member of The Holy Name Society. The Holy Name Society is one of the oldest and most traditional groups and we are excited to be bringing it back to Sacred Heart.

**Christmas Pageant:** As is traditional the 5 PM Mass on Christmas Eve, Sunday December 24th will have a pageantry theme. If anyone in grades 2-12 wishes to participate in the pageant please contact Tina Althoff at (718) 702-7207.

**Feast of the Immaculate Conception:** The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is Friday, December 8th and is a Holy Day of Obligation. Sacred Heart Mass times are as follows: Thursday December 7th at 7 PM and Friday, December 8th at 7 AM, 9 AM and 7 PM. There will be a school Mass at 10 AM.