

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Saturday, July 1:

5:00 Laura Elizabeth O’Hanlon

Sunday, July 2:

7:00 Eleanor Torkelson  
9 :00 Benjamin Zarelli  
11:00 People of the Parish  
1:00 Kathleen Sozio  
5:00 Linda Giannico

Monday, July 3:

9:00 Diana Kisto

Tuesday, July 4:

9:00 Deceased Members of the Priday  
& Borgersen Families

Wednesday, July 5:

9:00 Antonia Altergrace Peigne

Thursday, July 6:

9:00 Grace Reilly

Friday, July 7:

9:00 MaryAnn Conlon

Saturday, July 8:

9:00 William O’Driscoll  
5:00 Helen & John Kubasek

Sunday, July 9:

7:00 Susan Pellecchia  
9:00 Marie Mello  
11:00 Sarah Ahern  
1:00 People of the Parish  
5:00 Eileen Downing

Saturday, July 8:

5:00 Mary Rosso Barbara Kelly

Sunday, July 9:

7:00 Vincent O’Grady  
9:00 Don O’Shea Evelyn Bilotto  
11:00 Maria Montouri Regina Torello  
1:00 Pat Jezycki Rosetta Messina  
5:00 Jack Gordon 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, Baby Michael John DiCostanzo, JoAnn DiPietro, Robert Williams, Sebastian Lattuga, Linda Browne, Frances Nodar, Tina Russo, Nathaniel Sasha, Kathryn Capofari, Crystal Helewa, Fr. Raymond Dolan, Rosemary Regan, Anthony Umana, Barbara Rotondo, Carmela D’Angelo, Mark Herman, Richard Juliano, Arthur Schmitt Sr., Richard Christie

Collections:

June 25th.....\$6,364.00  
Budget Deficit.....\$329.00  
Congratulations to M/M Samuel Medina on winning the June 2017 50/50.

**Sacred Heart Rectory & Masses:** The Rectory has begun summer office hours. It will be open from 9AM to 8PM. Also note that there is no 7AM Mass during July & August. Finally, the office will be closed on both Monday, July 3rd and Tuesday, July 4th in honor of The Fourth of July Holiday. Enjoy, be safe and God bless.

## NOTE FROM THE PASTOR:

Dear Parishioners:

It was April 18, 2017. Father Samuel Okwuidegbe, a Nigerian Jesuit, was leaving his home around noon. He had just spoken to his provincial, Fr. Chuks Afiawari, who made a joke saying, "Make sure where you are going they don't kidnap you." They both laughed. On the drive he heard sporadic gunshots. "On glancing back I saw all the vehicles behind me stopping and trying to reverse. That's when it hit me that there was something dangerous ahead of me. On looking up I saw masked men with AK47 rifles shooting. I was so scared. I stopped my car abruptly and began to reverse, but as I was trying to do that a man suddenly appeared." That man told Fr. Samuel to get out of the car or he would shoot. He surrendered and came out.

They were Muslim Fulani from the northern part of Nigeria. They forced him and two other men through a path in the bush for eight hours. While on the trek through the forest, they let one of the kidnapped men go because he was sickly and could not keep up with the pace. The kidnappers were agitated that he was slowing them down. They even deliberated on killing him at one point. Fr. Samuel began asking himself, "Is this happening to me? This can't be happening to me, God. Why? Why God?"

Next came torture. They did not believe that he was a priest. They asked for his phone but he had left it in the car. They removed his cassock and tied his hands and feet behind him. Then they threw him into the dirt and began to beat him with the back of their guns, kick him hard in his ribs, slap him across the face and drag him across the ground. Then they brought a cloth close to his nose. He could smell paraffin. One of them said, "We are going to burn you alive!" He believed it. He began to pray in silence: "God, I commit to You my spirit." That night he wondered how much longer he would be alive and prayed the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. He kept humming the refrain to a Catholic hymn that gave him comfort. As he stared at his bruises and deep welts he hoped for a miracle.

The next day they went to a different place in the afternoon. The captors kept coming to Fr. Samuel to ask if he had a phone number to give them so that they could begin the ransom process. However, like most cell-phone owners these days he no longer bothered to remember numbers. He would speed dial to make his calls. They were not pleased with this explanation and so they slapped him each time he failed to give a number. Meanwhile the other man had managed to contact his brothers, and they were negotiating. Fr.

Samuel then begged his captors to go on the internet and look up the Jesuit website and find a phone number. At first they seemed afraid to be tracked and so they refused, but then they reconsidered. They got the phone number of the provincial and began the negotiations.

Meanwhile, hunger and thirst started to overwhelm him. The Fulani left some water for the captives but he chose not to drink it out of fear of getting sick from contaminants. He began to be tempted to despair. He prayed for death. But then he had consoling thoughts that word must have reached others about his capture and, as a result, the sisters at the retreat center where he worked would be praying for him. This gave him hope.

On Friday, money was delivered and they were released around 8 PM. They left the kidnappers and began walking without knowing where they were going in the pitch black, through farms where there were traps and vigilantes watching out for intruders, and then through a forest with dangerous animals. They finally came to a home after about an hour. They heard a woman's voice. Fr. Samuel said, "Please, we need help, we had just been kidnapped." The moment she heard kidnapped, she became alarmed and said, "Let me call my 'Oga' (my husband)." The other man said, "Madam could we please get some water to drink? We are very thirsty." That request touched her, and so she came out with her husband. After the water was served the two men began to cry. When their friends and family reached them there was great relief. Fr. Samuel recalls, "I began to feel the pains now, all the torturous moments at the forest came flooding over me. I sobbed uncontrollably... my pain, exhaustion and fear...with relief, with joy, but also with deep sadness at the thought of where we had just been."

When Father Samuel got home he received calls from all over the world. Crowds flocked to see him at his parish. People reached out to him who had not spoken to him in years. Family and friends came and asked, "Fr. Sam, are you okay?" Yes, he would answer. It was a miracle. "This experience was painful and traumatizing, but it has renewed my faith in God and my faith in people." He said his ordeal has led to his being "more than ever encouraged" to help others who suffer.

Jesus brings good out of the trials and tribulations that we suffer. Praise the Lord!

God Bless You!

Father Eric

**Sacred Heart 2017-2018:** Sacred Heart is now accepting applications for the 2017-2018 school year. Sacred Heart School is a West Brighton fixture with a rich history of academic and athletic success. At Sacred Heart children 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 Chrome Books 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.

**“Formed”:** “Formed” is a Catholic based website which features inspiring movies, compelling presentations and E-Books from some of the Church’s most prominent speakers. The website helps Catholics grow in their relationship with Christ as well as draw back Catholics who have fallen away from Him. By using “Formed” parishioners can be informed for Mass by watching brief videos on the week’s readings, enjoy family movies which are nourishing and entertaining . Enrich your child’s faith with engrossing and engaging materials geared towards young Catholics. To register and use the website simply visit [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org) on your browser, click on register, enter the parish access code which is KNKZHC, enter your email and select a password. That is all you need to do to use this very enjoyable Catholic website.

**St. Joseph’s Retreat Center**  
(St. Joseph Hill Academy)

**Summer 2017 Program Schedule**

**Friday-Sunday, July 7-9th:** Midsummer Silent Retreat facilitated by Sister Gerrie Contento. Cost of \$200 for single, \$250 for double and a nonrefundable deposit of \$50 due by June 30th. In peace and silence give yourself the gift of solitude with God. Be refreshed and renewed through silent prayer and reflection as well as celebrating the Eucharist.

**Sunday-Friday, August 13-18th:** Heart Themes in The Gospel: A Guided Retreat. Arrival Sunday 4 P.M. departure Friday 10:30 A.M. Facilitated by Father Roch Ciandella single rooms are available for \$400 and \$450 for a double with a nonrefundable deposit due by August 7th. The heart is the very center of our being and our basis for acting and thinking. Join us as we consider the non violent heart, the heart of compassion and the understanding and discerning abilities of the heart. Each day will have a reflection, Mass with a homily, perpetual adoration and confession services.

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

**Choir News:** The Sacred Heart Adult and Children’s Choirs will not sing during the months of July and August. They will reconvene in September at the usual times for rehearsals and singing for Mass. I would like to wish you all a very happy and enjoyable summer and thanks for all the kindness you have shown to me since I arrived.

Tom Czarnecki

**ALTAR SERVER SCHEDULE**

**Saturday July 8, 2017:**

5:00 : Matthew, Julia & Sean Ahern

**Sunday July 9, 2017:**

7:00 K. Postler, N. Ramdass, J. Lotito

9:00 M. Riccardi, G. Seaborg, A. Schmitt

11:00 V. Kaleta, A. Maida, T. Koleci

1:00 H. Xuereb, M. Perkert, R. Delamasa

5:00 W. Hollnsteiner, J. Oliveras, M. Artuz