

The Epiphany of The Lord



Saturday, January 6:
5:00 James J. McVey

Saturday, January 13:
5:00 Mary Rosso

Barbara Kelly

Sunday, January 7:
7:00 Deceased Members of The Quinn & McCauley Families & Souls in Purgatory
9:00 William Schmidt
11:00 People of the Parish
1:00 Maureen Driscoll
5:00 Joseph DiSalvo

Sunday, January 14:
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

Monday, January 8:
7:00 Wayne Nash
9:00 Terry Walsh Sr. (26th Anniversary)



Tuesday, January 9:
7:00 Wayne Nash
9:00 John Tighe

Susan Pellecchia, Lois Mazzitelli, Meghan Clark, Alberto Meranda, Anna Parente, James Parente, Mary Kenny, John C. Marino, Cpl Justin Campbell, Sheila Jones, Frank Silvestri, Barbara Walsh, Christian Pepo, Jean Forte, Kathryn Capofari, Rosemary Regan, Anthony Umana, Barbara Rotondo, Mark Herman, Frances Bocignone, Crystal Helewa, Daniel Juliano, Lizabeth Walsh, Joseph DeMeo, Moira Mackey, Michael DiCostanzo, Carol Perrone

Wednesday, January 10:
7:00 Souls in Purgatory
9:00 Charles Donohue

Thursday, January 11:
7:00 Vocations from The Parish
9:00 Hon. Louis R. Jerome Sr.

Collections:
December 24th.....\$6,339.00
December 31st.....\$6,493.00
Christmas 2017.....50,674.00
Christmas Flowers.....\$2,274.00
Congratulations to M/M Robert Heath on winning the December 2017 Fifty-Fifty

Friday, January 12:
7:00 Sarah Schmitt
9:00 Marie D. Carnegie

Saturday, January 13:
9:00 James J. McVey
5:00 William Kelly

Sunday, January 14:
7:00 Souls in Purgatory
9:00 Deceased Members of The Perry Family
11:00 People of the Parish
1:00 Xeu Qian Zheng
5:00 Chen Yin Lian

We ask that you remember the souls of our recently departed parishioners and their families in your thoughts and prayers especially: Mary Tighe, Eleanor Cooper, Pamela Spitzfaden, Katherine Sullivan, Jean S'Dao and Viviveen Silva. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

## NOTE FROM THE PASTOR:

Dear Parishioners:

In every story there are the main characters. In today's great feast of the Epiphany we start with King Herod. Who is King Herod in the Bible? There are four. There is Herod the Great who reigned when Christ was born. His son was Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas had John the Baptist beheaded (Mt 14:1-12) because John spoke of God's law about sexual chastity and Herod's behavior was thereby condemned. John preached that only relations between a validly married man and his wife are holy. All other acts of the flesh are sinful. Herod Antipas was offended by this teaching because he was a sinner. Herod Antipas also abused our Lord during His Passion (Lk 23:7-11). He clothed Him in a white robe and mocked Him. Herod Agrippa I is the nephew of Herod the Great. He executed St. James the Apostle, brother of St. John the Evangelist (Acts 12:1-3). He also imprisoned St. Peter (Acts 12:4-7). He died suddenly and mysteriously after the crowds proclaimed that he was a god (Acts 12:20-23). Lastly, there is Herod Agrippa II. It was before him that St. Paul answered Jewish accusations when Paul was prisoner in Caesarea (Acts 25:23).

It was Herod the Great who was involved in the events of the Epiphany. He was the son of non-Jewish parents. They called him great not because he was great in virtue, but great in power. He was an Edomite, which means he was related to Esau. As you recall, Isaac, the son of Abraham, had two twin sons: Jacob, also called Israel, and Esau. Strictly speaking, Herod, therefore, was not a true Jew from the racial point of view. This is important because on his death bed, Jacob predicted to his sons that the Messiah, the Christ, would be a descendent of Judah, son of Jacob. (Gen 49). In fact, that is why we call the children of Israel "Jews."

Jacob also prophesied that the Christ would be born when someone outside the race of Judah would serve as king. Herod matches this description. Hence, the prophecy was fulfilled. Herod was appointed King of the Jews by the Roman Senate in 40 BC to replace the collapsing dynasty of the Jewish priestly rulers. He was very friendly with the pagan Romans. He was a consummate politician. He rebuilt the Temple on a grand scale. Unfortunately, Herod was notorious for his cruelty. He killed over half of his ten wives, some of his children and many well-known people. Knowing how unpopular he was because of his brutality, Herod ordered an entire village to be slaughtered at the moment of his death. Why? So that at least some people would be mourning when he died.

Who are the other main characters of the Epiphany? The Three Kings, also called the Three Magi, or Three Wise Men. They were astronomers who studied the heavens. Astronomy is good. Astrology and horoscopes are evil. By putting our trust in horoscopes or card readers or psychics, instead of putting our trust in God's love for us, we violate the First Commandment. The word 'Magi' comes from a Hebrew word *hagah*, which means to meditate. How else are we to become wise except by meditating on the Word of God? The Wise Men meditated on the Word of God from their home in Arabia near the Euphrates River (modern Iraq). They are descendents of Abraham not through Isaac, the son of Abraham's wife Sarah, but through Ishmael, the son of

Abraham's slave Hagar.

The Magi remembered the prophecy of Balaam, in the *Book of Numbers* (24:17) which had announced the coming of the Messiah by the sign of a star (Num 24:17). Balaam predicted: *A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.* Herod the Edomite knew the prophecy too. That is why he was so troubled at the appearance of the star because he knew that the same oracle foretold disaster for his family. The Scripture says that with the coming of the Messiah *Edom shall be dispossessed* (24:18). St. Augustine says, "If [Christ's] birth as an infant makes proud kings tremble, what will His tribunal as [the Universal] Judge do? Let princes fear Him sitting at the right hand of His Father, whom this impious king feared while He hanged yet on His mother's breast. [*Catena Aurea*, MT 69.]

There is another character in the story that we should mention: the star. This was a very unusual star. Normally, stars are located in the firmament. This one was down here in our atmosphere. Stars are light years away from us. What is a light year? It is the amount of distance light travels in a year. Light travels 186,000 miles per second, 16 billion miles a day, about 6 trillion miles a year. If you boarded a space ship to travel to the nearest star in the night sky you would die of old age before you reached that star. But this star was different. It was very close to the earth.

Other stars have a circular motion from our vantage point here below. This star traveled in a straight line. It went before the Magi in their journey from Arabia to Judea. Other stars shine only at night. This one shined in the day as well. Other stars keep shining for centuries and centuries. This star was temporary. It continued only during the period of the Wise Men's journey from Christmas, on the 25th of December, to January 6th, the day of the Epiphany, 13 days later. This star sometimes hid itself. When the Magi went forward, it went forward. When they rested, it rested. It stood over the house where Christ was. Then, when its work was accomplished, it vanished. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt to the promised land in the time of Moses. It was a foreshadowing of this star, which led the gentiles out of slavery to their false beliefs into the light of Christ's truth.

In the famous scene from the Gospel where the disciples forbid children from approaching Christ, the Lord Jesus says: *Let the children come to me and do not hinder them for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.* (Matthew 19:14). One of those children was Saint Ignatius of Antioch who died a few years after St. John the Apostle. St. Ignatius knew all about this star because he lived around the time of its coming. He wrote: "The star shone so as to surpass in brightness all other stars. Its light was indescribable. Its newness struck all with amazement. All the rest of the stars together with the sun and moon were a kind of chorus for that star."

What did that star do? It led others to Christ. That is what you and I do. Think of all the times you and I have led others to Jesus. What a privilege!

God Bless You!

Father Eric

[Bibliography: Cornelius Lapide, *Commentary on St. Matthew*]

**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.

**March for Life:** This year's March for Life will take place on Friday, January 19th 2018. Once again a bus will depart from Sacred Heart after a special 6:30 AM Mass. Seats are available at \$30 each, anybody unable to pay will be gladly accommodated. If you wish to go on the trip please contact Jack Gordon at (718) 727-7168

## **ALTAR SERVER SCHEDULE**

**Saturday, January 13, 2018**

5:00 : W. Hollnsteiner, M. Donovan. N. Ramdass

**Sunday, January 14, 2018:**

7:00 M. Perkert, C. Basile, A. Basile

9:00 Mary, Ann & Siobhan McCafferty

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

1:00 R. Delamasa, G. Seaborg, W. Wenzel

5:00 J. Mullen, A. Schmitt, A. Cruz

## **St. Joseph Retreat Center Overnight Retreats**

(St. Joseph Hill Academy)

**New Beginnings with God:** Friday-Sunday, January 12-14th, \$200 for single, \$400 for double, facilitated by Kathy M. Irr. The weekend will give the participants space to ponder, pray and encounter God. Reflective experiences during retreats will sustain a deeper relationship with God throughout the year.

**Lenten Silent Directed Retreat:** Friday– Sunday March 2-4th, facilitated by Nanci Bachman and Pat Stephens. As we journey through Lent, we take a pause and this week provides silent time and space to enter into the heart of Jesus. Each day there is Mass, meetings with spiritual directors and time for prayer.

**Meditation Monday:** January 8th, February 12th, March 12th, April 9th and May 7th. 7:30-9 PM. \$20 per session, facilitated by Grace Daquila. Come and be renewed, refreshed and restored with an evening of faith sharing, reflection and prayer.

**Centering Prayer Group:** Wednesdays (January 10th & 24th, February 14th and 28th, March 14th and 28th). 7:30-9 PM, facilitated by Ann Louise DePalo, \$10 per session. Come and pray and rest in God's presence. Light refreshments are served so come journey with others looking for a deeper, more personal relationship with God. 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)



## **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 Holy Name Society is one of the oldest and most traditional groups and we are excited to be bringing it back to Sacred Heart. All men of the parish ages 18 and older can join and meetings are held on the first Sunday of the month at 6:30 PM in the school auditorium. Light refreshments are served. The next meeting is on January 7th at 6:30 PM in the small cafeteria.

**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.