

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND CHURCH

Making Disciples through Prayer, Faith Formation and Service

December 24, 2023

Celebration of the Holy Eucharist

Weekday—(Monday through Friday 9:00 AM

Sunday—8:00 AM, 10:00AM and 12 Noon

Confessions

Saturday—4:00—4:45 PM in the church or by appointment



Pastoral Staff

Msgr. Robert Batule -

Pastor x111

Rev. Patrick Abu-Bonsra -

Parochial Vicar x116

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Deacons

- *Retired:* Dcn Ed Hayes

Dcn William Kogler,

Dcn Biagio Muratore

Parish Center Office –

Receptionist x0

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Music Ministry

Dr. Daniel Crews,

Director x117

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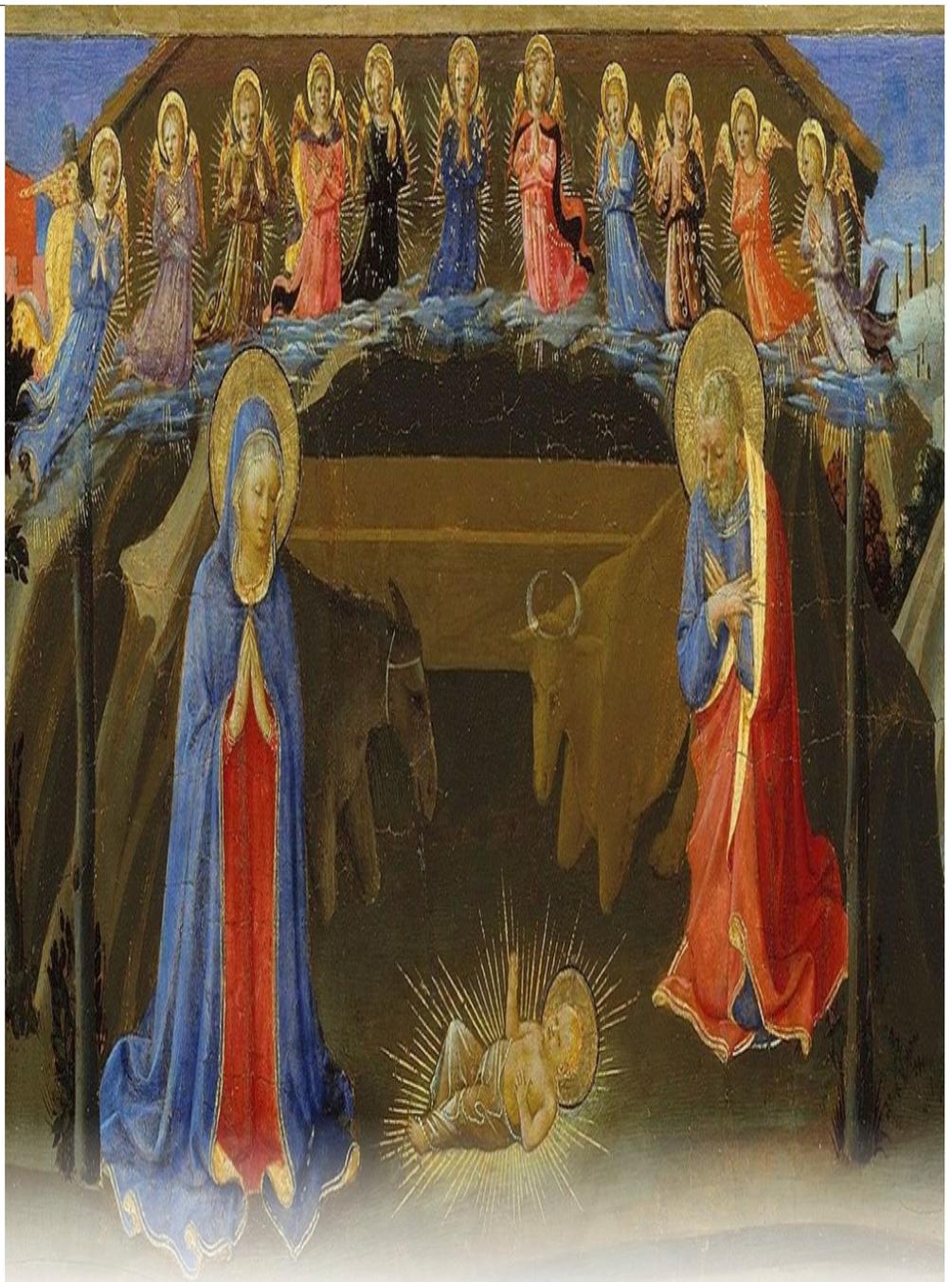
Parish Outreach

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Holy Angels Regional Catholic School

Patchogue, NY 631-475-0422

Jeannine Stewart, Principal



The following meditation on the Christmas Mystery is offered by Msgr. Batule, with his compliments, for the Parishioners of Saint Margaret.

It's hard to argue against technological advancement when a certain surgery adds fifteen years to the life of a loved one. It's hard to argue against the information age when a computer allows you to down-load data from a library in Vienna on to your p.c. in a matter of several minutes. But there is a down-side to technological advancement and the information age. Technological advancement and the information age have weakened our capacity to wonder.

The philosopher Sam Keen once wrote that wonder is the basis for all philosophy. In order to get at the meaning of life, he wrote, you must wonder.

What the philosophers call wondering about the curiosities of life, Christians call beholding the mysteries of life. Along with the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, Christians most wonder about the Incarnation. How is it that a Divine Person took on flesh and became like us in all things but sin?

We call Christmas a mystery because the birth of Jesus Christ is unlike any other birth. Jesus was born to a married woman who never at any time had sexual relations with her husband. The Holy Spirit had come upon Mary and overshadowed her (cf. Lk 1:35), thereby conceiving the Child. Without the seed of man, the Child grew in His mother's womb until such time that a son was born. (cf. Matt 1:25)

I must confess that it is getting harder and harder in our culture to find the image of the Madonna and Child. Some devout Christians who send Christmas cards still use this image but advertisers don't. Advertisers and merchandisers don't use the image of the Madonna and Child because it doesn't sell.

Mystery doesn't sell but neither can we rid ourselves of it completely. The greatest unsolved mysteries are not the stories of a television show but the largely silent witness of those who love unto death.

When Christ was born in Bethlehem, very few were there. The Madonna was there, of course, and so was Joseph her just, industrious and chaste spouse. The shepherds were there, too. (cf. Lk 2:16-17) But apart from these, only the angels witnessed this mysterious occurrence. (cf. Lk 2:15)

When Christ died on Calvary, very few were there again. According to the evangelist, the mother of Jesus, along with her sister and two other Marys assembled at the foot of the Cross along with the Beloved Apostle John. (cf. Jn 19:25) Before drawing His last breath, Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to a new son, a son born of apostolic love. (cf. Jn 19:27)

As the Christ Child lay in the manger (cf. Lk 2:8), His tender flesh pressed against wood. More than thirty years later, the flesh of the God-Man pressed against the wood of the Cross. The Incarnation was an embrace of pain and suffering as well as delight and joy. The Incarnation is a divine commitment to love unto death.

We are children of the manger and the Cross. We bubble with excitement over sacramental marriages and sacramental ordinations. As memories of the ceremonies begin to fade, do we set down our crosses? No, we take them up and follow in the footsteps of the Master. (cf. Mk 8:34) In doing so, we do not so much save our lives as we lose them. (cf. Mk 8:35)

Now here's something that definitely won't sell: losing your life. Not even the philosophers can accept this. How can you find the meaning of your life if you lose your life? It doesn't make sense.

Pope Saint John Paul II called losing your life the law of the gift. In other words, you never discover the true meaning of your life until you lose it in commitment. Christ is committed to us in the Incarnation and the Cross. Both mysteries are grounded in love. Although not the only commitments to Christ, sacramental marriage and sacramental ordination are public expressions of a mysterious love unto death. In marriage, the flesh of husband and wife are joined together to project into the world the redoubtable image of God. In ordination, a mere man is given the awesome power to call down the flesh of the Son of God on an altar.

In his book *The Rumor of Angels*, Peter Berger writes that we have signals of transcendence in our midst. The angels no doubt testified to the presence of the Divine on earth two thousand years ago. Today, angels continue this great work but we can't see them. We can see, however, those committed human beings who love unto death. They are the signals of transcendence who remind a skeptical world that Christmas is first, last and always a mystery.

If we can give thanks for a flesh that is destroyed, surely then we can give thanks today for a flesh that is brand new. In this Eucharist, immolated flesh becomes life-giving flesh. The Incarnation of Jesus made Him subject to death. But God has conquered death through the Resurrection. The love we celebrate today is not just a love unto death but a love through death and unto everlasting life

Merry Christmas!

Msgr. Batule

Christmas Schedule 2023

Confessions

Wednesday, December 20th

5:00 PM—7:00 PM

Christmas Masses

Sunday, December 24th

4:00PM

12:00 Midnight

Monday, December 25th

8:00 AM

New Years Schedule

New Year's Eve Schedule

Sunday, December 31st

5:00PM

New Year's Day Schedule

10:00AM



Christmas 2023

To the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Center:

Merry Christmas to you and your families!

In recent years at Christmas, I have meditated on the relationship between the Nativity of the Prince of Peace and the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

I have been especially inspired by the Pope Francis' analysis of the Parable of the Good Samaritan in the second chapter of his 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. It is powerful and provocative, and I would recommend it for your mental prayer.

The short phrase in the Christmas Gospel narrative in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke reads: "She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

"No room for them in the inn." No Good Samaritan stepped up to help the Holy Family. They were ignored and treated perfunctorily and impatiently. Some passed them by. Some pretended not to notice their plight.

Remember too that in the Parable of the Good Samaritan an "inn" is also mentioned. Luke 10 reads: "But a Good Samaritan while traveling came near him, and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn and took care of him."

The inn that the Holy Family approaches on the way to Bethlehem is a sign of rejection and indifference.

The inn in the Parable of the Good Samaritan is a sign of the Good Samaritan's compassion and commitment to go the extra mile and to make sure that the wounded man is taken care of until he is completely healed.

Contemporary literary criticism might very well emphasize that the use of "inn" by the Gospel writer in both the Nativity in Luke 2 and the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 is not by accident.

In a sense, the phrase “there was no room at the inn” in the Nativity foreshadows and connects with the phrase in the Parable of the Good Samaritan describing the callous indifference of both the priest and the Levite toward the wounded man on the side of the road: “He passed by on the other side.”

As Pope Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti*: “Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders.”

Our Lady, St. Joseph and the unborn Christ Child experienced the reality of people who decided to be indifferent bystanders.

The Christmas Gospel narrative from Luke 2 poses a question which is posed again later in the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

Will we be Good Samaritans?

Or will we be indifferent bystanders?

As the Holy Father reminds us, we make that choice every day.

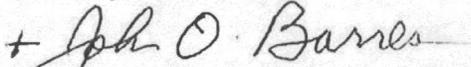
May our prayer, silent contemplation and creative family catechesis of the Nativity scene help us to be instruments of a Nativity Mystery. May the Good Samaritan Gospel revolution of humility, charity, mercy, tenderness and peace unite us in solidarity with the sick, the poor and the suffering, especially in the Middle East, Ukraine and all war-ravaged areas of the world.

May our commitment to “holiness and mission” bless our contemplative Synodal listening and our Eucharistic Revival and Evangelization.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your families:!

May the Light and Love of the Christ Child animate and guide our global Catholic Missionary Spirit on the Christmas night and throughout the New Year.

Sincerely in Christ,


 Most Reverend John O. Barres
 Bishop of Rockville Centre

Holiday Hours

The pastoral center will close at 1:00 pm on Friday December 22nd. We will reopen on Tuesday, December 26th at 9:00am.

We will close at 1:00pm on Friday, December 29th and will reopen at 9:00am on Tuesday, January 2nd.

Merry Christmas to all from the staff of Saint Margaret of Scotland.

Faith Formation

2024 –Twenty Minutes with the Pastor/Director

January

1/ 7 -Level 3,4&5
1/14-Level 6&7
1/21-Level 1&2
1/28Level 6&7

March

3/10-Level 1&2
3-17-Level 6&7

May

5/ 5– Level 1&2
5/12-Level 6&7
5/19 Level 3,4,&5

February

2/ 4-Level 3,4&5
2/11-Level 1&2
2//25-Level 6&7

April

4/ 7-Level 2,3,&4
4/14-Level 1&2
4/21-Level 6&7



Parish Social Ministry



Food Pantry Needs

PLEASE bring all donations to the front door of the Parish Center during office hours or bring to the box in the rear of the Church.

We are in need of **Bar Soap , Peanut Butter, Cereal, Shampoo, Toilet Paper and Jelly**

*A very special **THANK YOU** to all!*