



The Basilica of Saint John the Evangelist

The Mother Church of Stamford
279 Atlantic Street · Stamford, Connecticut 06901

December 4, 2011 Second Sunday of Advent



Pastor

Rev. Mons. Stephen M. DiGiovanni

**Parochial Vicar and
Director of Religious Education**

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Photo by John Glover

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Pastor's Corner. . . . Thursday, December 8th, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast day of the United States. At the end of the Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1846, the American Bishops decreed our nation should be placed under the protection of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. The American Bishops did this as their sign of support for Blessed Pope Pius IX in his efforts to define the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. But there was more than the 19th century American bishops being “politically correct” by supporting the pope. They earnestly desired to place the growing nation under the protection of Our Lady: since it was Mary whose obedience had united God to humankind in her womb, and under whose tutelage and protection was placed the salvation of the world, in the Person of Her Divine Son, Mary would prove the perfect spiritual mother for our nation. The pope desired to define formally this ancient belief of the faithful: that, while Saints Joachim and Anne had normal sexual relations as husband and wife in order that Anne might conceive, as promised her by an angel, it was God’s grace that preserved Mary from the effects of Adam’s Original Sin, from the moment she was conceived in her mother’s womb. This Original Sin is that with which each human being is born, the effects of which are our tendency to want to sin, and our deaths.

Why would the pope so desire to define this belief in the middle of the 19th century? Because Pope Pius IX understood quite clearly that the society was developing in a way that would urge the world to forget God in favor of “progress”, while re-defining the human person: in 1848 Karl Marx had published his Communist Manifesto, which would blossom 50 years later in the Russian Revolution and the horrors of Communism; the Industrial Revolution was in full swing, and would soon enslave millions around the world in the grip of grinding poverty and endless work; Prussia, France and England were developing exclusive, excessive nationalistic loyalties, with massive armies and military industries that would lead to two world wars. In all these movements, early in their development by the mid-19th century, the only European world leader who understood that men and women were being re-defined as worthy of life by their productivity in industry, their usefulness to a political party, loyalty to the state, their nationality or their race.

Pius saw his task as the one leader whose teachings would gain him nothing personally. He taught simply to remind humanity about who we are: our dignity and right to exist comes from our being created in the Image and Likeness of God, redeemed by God’s Eternal Son-made-man in the womb of the Virgin Mary. So, in 1854, backed by the Catholic bishops and faithful from around the globe, Blessed Pope Pius IX showed the world the power of the Catholic Church by formally reminding the world that nothing is more important in the world than God; and that nothing is more important to God than us.

Our Lady is the most perfect example of a human being, prepared by God from eternity to be the Mother of God: she didn’t create God, who exists from all eternity. But she gave to the Eternal and unseen God a human mind, heart, soul, will and body: the ever-existing God entered into human history and became man in the womb of Mary, in order to free us from sin and death. One of the most beautiful reflections of this is a homily given by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, whose writings form part of the Church’s teachings about Our Lady and Her Immaculate Conception:

“It befitted God to be born of none but a virgin, and it befitted the virgin that having borne God she should bear no other. The Creator of men, in becoming himself a man, had to choose, indeed even form, the kind of mother he knew befitted him and knew would please him. Therefore, he wanted her to be a virgin so that from a spotless one he, the Spotless One, might come forth to cleans away the sins of all mankind. He wanted her to be humble from whom he, as the man meek and humble of heart, would be born; he wanted her to give a salutary example of all the virtues. Therefore he made the Virgin conceive, for she earlier offered her vow of virginity to him but had also won the merit of humility. These were the glorious jewels of mind and body that adorned the royal Virgin. Her beauty was known in heaven, whose citizens gazed on her with admiration; she attracted the eyes of the King to herself and few down a heavenly messenger to greet her. The angel was sent to a virgin’: a virgin in flesh and spirit, a virgin by deliberate intention, a virgin such as the Apostle Saint Paul describes, holy in mind and body. The Lord did not stumble on her by accident but chose her from eternity; the Most High prepared her, the angels preserved her, the fathers pointed her out, the prophets promised her coming” [*Sermon II, In Praise of the Virgin Mary*].

And why did the pope accede to the American bishops’ desire that Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception should be the patroness of America? Because the pope had great hopes for the United States as the only nation under whose laws and freedoms the Catholic Church might prosper and grow. And he was right: in all European countries, throughout Asia, and in nearly all the countries of Central and South America, the Catholic Church was persecuted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries: Catholic schools, universities and churches closed, all church property seized, clergy and sisters imprisoned, killed and forbidden to wear clerical dress publicly. It is the same reason Blessed Pope Pius IX blessed the efforts of American bishops to build churches and schools for the millions of immigrant Catholics arriving in the United States, such as our own basilica, established as an independent parish in 1854—the same year of the definition of the Immaculate Conception; and the same reason that blessed pope established the American seminary in Rome in 1859. Nourish America, because it understands humanity’s need for freedom to worship God.

On December 8th, let us recall Our Lady’s faith and virtues, and the fact that a pope gave her to us Americans as our patroness and guide to remind us Americans—nothing is more important than God; and nothing is more important to God than us, through His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. —Msgr. DiGiovanni

Please pray for the sick. . . Eva Grace Kelly, John Murray, Billy Therriault, Megan Bobroske, Connie Ward, Corrine Mattson, Mary D'Arco, Anthony Sansone, Tessie Mulhern, Gary Everett, Margie Joyce, Tonin Gjepaj, Monica Dewey, Sandra Mayfield, Sr. Ellen Mary Doherty, C.S.J., Lily Ann O'Connell, Thomas Mahala, Titina Tarantino, Richard Ridge, Mario Stano, Mark Ferris, Marie Maddox, Terry Cooke, Stacey, Kathleen Nichols, Rev. Carlos Antonio Mesa, Corrie Evans, Shirly Mailhot, Roledonne Samedi.

Please pray for those who have recently died. . . Carmen Candelaria, Gregory E. Mazza, Vincent Sharkey, Sr., Madre Perpetua, Madeleine Charlotin, Louis Servideo, Gladys Brzoska, David Squires, Tom Potts, William Shanley, Jimmy O'Connor, Andrea Pavia, Rocco Buzzio, Vera Benna, Brian Bill, Olga Rich, Morris Smith, Sr. Elizabeth Hart, R.S.M., Margaret Mary Cycon, Mildred J. Fiore, Tana Sibilio, Dr. Bela Szele, Audrey Reda, Helen Pataky, William Kilcoyne, Jr., Giuseppina Docimo, Adelaide Velanzano, Aura Piedra, Jeanne & Andy Robustelli, Mary Ferrara, Genoveffa Melchionno, Cynthia Callahan, Teresa Angelini, Natale Sposato, Joseph George Terenzio.

Advent Parish Retreat. . . Monday, December 5th, Tuesday, Dec. 6th,

Wednesday, Dec. 7th: 7:30 p.m.– 8:00 p.m.: Spiritual Conference by the priests of the parish, adoration of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary and Benediction. Confessions will be heard each evening for the entire hour. All are welcome—including your children. Come prepare for Christmas by joining the parish in prayer & adoration, and by going to Confession.

Holy Day of Obligation. . . Thursday, December 8th: The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception: The Vigil Mass will be offered on Wednesday, **December 7th at 5:15 pm** and Masses on **December 8th: 8 a.m., 12:10 p.m. and 5:15 p.m.**

Walkway Construction. . . While the walkway between the church and the rectory is under construction, the side entrance is CLOSED. Please excuse the inconvenience.

Salus Populi Romani Icon Votive Memorial. . . In memory of Florida Gutierrez req. R. Mastracchio.

Our Lady's Altar Votive Light Memorial. . . Special intentions Ann and Jo.

Monday Evening Holy Hour . . . Monday nights 7-8:00 pm for *Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Rosary in the church.* **Next Holy Hour: Part of the Advent Retreat:, December 5th at 7:30 p.m.**

Latin Reading Group. . . Wednesdays: 6:15 pm in the Rectory (reading ability required).

New Study Group. . . Many people have asked that we again offer basic courses in Church Latin Grammar and Biblical Greek Grammar. So, let's try it again!! Anyone interested, please call Cindy in the parish office [203-324-1553, ext 21] and leave your name, phone, email, and we'll see if we can organize new groups to begin in January. As always, there is no charge for these courses, other than the purchase of books.

Biblical Greek Study Group. . . Thursdays: 6:30 pm in the Rectory (reading ability required).

Repainting the Church. . . **\$597,860.00** is pledged towards our goal of \$629,000.00. I ask everyone's help. Each parish priest is donating \$1,000.00. If each individual or household contributes **\$1,000, payable over 10 months,** we'll have it: that's \$100. per month, or \$25. per week, or \$3.57 per day for 10 months. Please, help.

ST. ANNE'S SOCIETY REMINDER. . . **NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11th ST. ANNE'S SOCIETY WILL MEET IN THE CHURCH HALL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 5:00 pm THE MASS. DR. JOAN KELLY WILL BE RETURNING — ALL ARE WELCOME!!!**

Sunday November 27, 2011 \$ 12,036.59

Sunday November 28, 2010 \$ 11,741.24

**“I ask you one thing: do not tire of giving to God, but do not give your leftovers.”
---Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

December 11th Sunday Readings: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28.

Latin Mass. . . Fr. Cyprian LaPastina offers the Latin Mass in the Extraordinary Form each Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. here at Saint John's. The next Latin Mass is **Tuesday, December 6th**.

Children's Choir. . . Anmarie and Tom Galgano are our new music directors for the 10 a.m. Mass and Children's Choir this year. Any parent whose child or children might be interested in joining the Children's Choir to sing during each Sunday 10 a.m. Mass, please call the rectory, and leave your name, your child's name, age and your phone number with Cindy: 203-324-1553, ext. 21.

Home Schooling Families. . . A group for home schooling families meets monthly on Tuesday in the rectory. All ages are welcome. Please contact Julianne DeMarco at 203-966-3641, juliannedemarco@yahoo.com, or Janet Lancaster at 203-637-3301, jmlancaster@optonline.net.

St. John's 20's and 30's: The Flock. . . .our new young adult group, offers social and community service activities. Meetings on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the rectory. **Doors open at 7:00 PM.** (More info: Deirdre.Garrahan@gmail.com). **Next meeting: Thursday, DECEMBER 15th in the Rectory**

Project Rachel Ministry. . . offers free and confidential help to those seeking healing after abortion. We invite you to come back to God who is love and mercy. Info. (203) 416-1619 or projectrachel@diobpt.org.

Job Seekers . . . Meets the 4th Monday monthly in the rectory at 7:30pm: all are welcome. There's no charge for these services. The group is led by Melanie Szlucha whose company, Red Inc., is a leader in helping find jobs. More info, see: www.redinc.biz or call her at 203-866-1606. **Next meeting: Monday, January 23rd.**

Saint Monica Patristic Institute. . . **Will next meet on the Wednesdays of January: 4th, 11th, 18th, 25,** starting at 7:30 pm in the rectory. Our topic in January will be the theology of Origen, led by Father Michael Novajoski, parochial vicar of St. Jude Parish, Monroe. There is no charge; classes are 1 hour, and all the texts are in English translations. You'll love this stuff! Everyone is welcome.

Christmas Bake Sale - Recipe for Success: Gather bakers: men, women and children of all ages, add terrific recipes for cakes, pies, breads and cookies, then throw in a bit of homemade candy and a generous serving of Homemade Pasta, add a Gingerbread House and set it all up in Monsignor Nagle Hall, ready to sell after the 4PM mass on Saturday. The critical ingredient for this throw down-great fund raiser is YOU! We need all of our parishioners to come on down, after the 4PM Saturday mass and following all masses on Sunday AM, concluding with the noon mass. We need you to purchase these delicious, festively wrapped goodies so that we can raise some funds for our Basilica. There will be plenty of good cheer to pass around so come on down! Need a recipe, have a question: call Tracy Banahan at 203-834-0284 or email her at southold6@optonline.net.

The 2nd Annual St. Maria Goretti Society Food Drive Was a Tremendous Success... Thanks to our generous parishioners and **dedicated members who made it possible to donate over 75 bags of food (over 1000 lbs!) to the needy of our parish and community. What a beautiful gift of time and effort offered to our Lord by the girls who sorted, packed, and delivered the food. The support from everyone involved was overwhelming and most appreciated, especially at this blessed time of Thanksgiving!**

Mass Intentions

+ Denotes Deceased

Saturday, December 3, 2011

4:00 +John and Evelyn Sexton req. Hannah Sexton Young

Sunday, December 4, 2011

7:30 +Reynaldo Ramon Espinosa req. Celia M. Batan

8:30 +Iolonda Caminiti req. Marion, Bill, Richard Morris, Jimmy & Michelle Sagdati

10:00 +Carrie Stuart req. David Lancaster

12:00 +Tom Pingue req. Antonio and Maria Marchetti

5:00 +Louise and Arthur Thiel

6:00 +Patrick Kane & Family req. Estate of Catherine Kane & Family

Monday, December 5, 2011

8:00 People of the Parish

12:10 In Honor of the Infant Prague req. Marie J. Mathias

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

8:00 +Margaret Timon req. Tom Timon

12:10 +Julius Sebestyen family req. family

Wednesday, December 7, 2011

8:00 +Justine and Charite Paulemon req. Montanise Paulemon

12:10 +Harold John Frost req. daughter Kim Frost

5:15 +St. Jean Francis Regis req. Josephine Languedoc

Thursday, December 8, 2011

8:00 +Virginia and Eileen Carr req. Marie Carr

12:10 For the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary req. Ferry G.

5:15 Special Intention Josie Languedoc req. Diane Strain

Friday, December 9, 2011

8:00 In Honor of St. Rita req. Marie J. Mathias

12:10 Special Intention Mary Rose Garych and family req. Josephine Languedoc

Saturday, December 10, 2011

8:00 In Honor of St. Francis of Assisi req. Marie J. Mathias

12:10 +John Van Dereedt req. his wife

Baptisms. . . Are celebrated every day of the week, according to the schedule of the parish priests and the families. Baptisms at St. John's are one-family only ceremonies: never groups. Please call Cindy (203-324-1553, ext 21).

Holy Name Society. . . For the men of the parish, **meets Fridays in the Rectory, 7-7:50 a.m.** for coffee, Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction. All men of the parish are welcome. We finish in time for the 8am Mass.

Moms & Tots . . . Moms and their kids **meets in the Church each first Tuesday of every month at 10:30a.m.**

St. Anne's Society . . .A family society meeting four times a year on Sundays after the 5pm mass, with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and prayer, supper, and a lecture in the church hall.

Pray to end Legalized Abortion . . . Wednesdays, 7-10:30a.m., Stamford's Planned Parenthood, 1039 East Main St.

St. Dominic Savio Society. . . For the spiritual formation of young men, 8th-12th grades. Call Ferry at 203-324-1553 ext. 22.

St. Maria Goretti Society. . . For the spiritual formation of young ladies, 8th-12th grades. Call Beth at 203-975-0074.

Holy Hour. . . on Monday Nights, **7pm—8 pm.** Adoration, Holy Rosary, and Benediction. All are welcome!

The Legion of Mary. . . . Meets Wednesday Evenings at 7:30 pm 'till 9:00 pm in the rectory. All are welcome.

St. Monica Institute for Patristic Studies. . . Wednesdays, 7:30 pm in the rectory: Next meeting, November 2nd.

The Latin Reading Group. . . Meets Wednesday evenings at 6:15 pm in the rectory: basic reading ability required.

Introduction to Biblical Greek . . . Meets Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm in the rectory: basic reading ability required.

Coffee Hour. . . After the 10:00 a.m. Family Mass in the Monsignor Nagle Parish Hall. All are welcome.

ST. JOHN'S IN THE NEWS:

55 YEARS AGO, OR SO:

THE STAMFORD ADVOCATE:

December 6, 1954: Catholic Churches

Schedule Masses For Wed. Evening. "For the first time in the history of the Catholic Church in Stamford, evening masses will be held in most of Stamford's Catholic Churches on Wednesday, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the end of the Marian Year. All of the churches will hold their regular morning masses and, with the exception of Sacred Heart Church, all will hold masses in the late afternoon or evening. Solemn High Mass with a sermon will be celebrated at Holy Name Church at 7:30 p.m., and at St. John's at 8 p.m. High Mass with music will be celebrated at St. Benedict's at 7:30 p.m. and at St. Clement's at 4 p.m. Low Masses with music will be said at 8 p.m. at St. Mary's and St. Maurice's." (EDITOR'S NOTE: The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854.)

THE HARTFORD COURANT:

December 8, 1954: Rites Today Mark End

Of Marian Year. "Catholics around the world today celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, marking the end of the Marian Year. In many churches through the state, and in the cathedrals at Hartford, Norwich and Bridgeport, special evening masses will be sung, in addition to the regular morning masses of a Holy Day of Obligation. Bishops gave permission for the evening Masses as a climax of the Marian Year. Throughout the Roman Catholic Church, the year was dedicated to special observances honoring Mary, the mother of Christ. It marked the centennial of the papal proclamation of the Immaculate Conception. This is the dogma that proclaims that the Blessed Virgin was conceived and born free of sin. At St. Joseph's Cathedral, a pontifical mass will be celebrated tonight at 7:30 by the Most Rev. Henry J. O'Brien, Archbishop of Hartford. It will be the first occasion for his wearing the sacred pallium since it was bestowed on him Sunday. The Rev. Walter B. Sullivan, Dominican priest from New York, who has been conducting a triduum at the cathedral, will give the sermon tonight. The Rev. John J. Byrnes, rector of St. Thomas Seminary, and the Rev. Leo Picher, spiritual director, will be deacons of honor. Seminarians from St. Thomas will assist."

Mass Schedule:

Saturday: 8:00a.m., 12:10p.m. & 4:00p.m. (Vigil)
Sunday: 7:30a.m. (No Music)
8:30a.m. (Latin Low Mass; No Music)
10:00a.m. (Family Mass; Childrens' choir)
12:00 Noon (Solemn Choir Mass)
5:00p.m. (No Music)
6:00p.m. Haitian Mass (French/ Creole)

Monday through Friday: 8:00a.m. & 12:10p.m.

Tuesdays: 9:30a.m. (Latin Mass)

Holy Days of Obligation:

- Vigil Mass (evening before): 5:15p.m.
- Holy Day: 8:00a.m., 12:10p.m. & 5:15p.m.

Confessions: (*English, Francais, Espanol, Italiano, Portuguese*).

Monday-Friday, Sunday 30 minutes prior to each Mass

Saturday: 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Anytime by appointment

Baptism

Parents must be parishioners of St. John's. Please call the parish office: (324-1553 ext. 21).

First Communion and Confirmation

For information on Religious Education, please call Fr. Walsh at (203) 324-1553 ext. 14 or at fritwalsh@catholic.org. Confirmation is a two-year program.

Sacramental records call Ferry Galbert at the rectory, 324-1553, ext. 22.

Marriage

Engaged couples should contact one of the parish priests at least 6 months in advance of the wedding. Marriages are not performed on Sundays at St. John's. At least one member of the engaged couple should be a regular and registered parishioner at St. John's.

Sick Calls, First Friday Communion Calls, and the Anointing of the Sick: Our priests would be happy to bring Communion, hear Confession and administer the Sacrament of the Sick to anyone seriously ill, homebound or in the hospital. Please call the rectory: 324-1553, ext. 21.

Devotions

- Miraculous Medal Novena: Monday, following the 8:00 a.m. Mass.
- Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: Friday, following the 8:00 a.m. Mass until 12:00 p.m.
- Daily Rosary following the noon Mass: Mon-Sat.

The Basilica of St. John Bookstore Hours

Sunday: 10:45a.m. - 12:00 Noon

Thursday: 11:30a.m. - 1:00p.m. (Closed during Mass)

Super-abundance via Self-Emptying

(REVISITED)

-Fr. Terry Walsh

As we prepare for the Birth of our Savior *into the world* and *into our souls*, consider the Manifestation of the Divinity of Christ at the Wedding Feast in Cana (John 2: 1-11) and contemplate the relationship it has with the miracle in Bethlehem on that cold, dark night 2000 years ago. Both mysteries involve a *super abundance* flowing from a complete *self-emptying* – and ultimately pour out the Radiant Light of Jesus Christ in the hearts and minds of all who enter into these Mysteries. In order for us to have access to the Light of Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity had to leave His rightful Throne of Glory and take upon Himself our lowly human nature – all out of love for us. He *emptied* Himself in order to bathe us in His Light in a *super-abundant* way. Yet, before we can receive His abundant Light, His gift of Divine Life, we too must undergo a “self-emptying” – a purification of our “*inner-man*” so that we might become “*children of the Light*.” And this illumination is beautifully demonstrated at the Marriage Feast in Cana. St. Paul speaks eloquently about this throughout his Letters, particularly the Letter to the Ephesians (See Ephesians chapter 3:14-21).

When Jesus and His disciples arrive at the scene in Cana, we notice that Mary is already there. While Mary is indeed the Great Mother of God, she is nevertheless deeply concerned about the smallest details of every single one of Her Children – that includes you and me. Just as she interceded at the Marriage Feast, so too does she intercede for us at the Throne of the Holy Trinity with a Mother’s love. Mary is intimately and mysteriously involved in our salvation won for us by her Son. Through her warm and tender love, the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus in a dark and troubled world. It was through her humble YES and through her faithful obedience to the Father that our Lord Jesus came into the world to dispel the darkness of sin. All who come to believe in Him are baptized into His Mystical Body and receive His indescribable Light. As St. Louis De Montfort teaches: *Jesus comes to us through Mary and we return to Him through Her*.

Our Lord listens to His Mother with the same love and affection today as He did at that wedding so many centuries ago. St. Louis de Montfort underscores Her role: “Mary is his mystic channel, his aqueduct, through which he causes his mercies to flow gently and abundantly.” His grace flows to the married couple in Cana through Her humble plea. As faithful children of so loving a Mother, we too must *listen to* our Mother as she beckons us: “Do whatever He tells you!” Some have suggested that the 6 Purification Jars in the story about the Wedding at Cana (The Gospel of John chapter 2:1-12) actually represent our hearts and minds, our bodies and souls, our wills and intellects. Our hope is to fill our jars with the waters of His Divine Grace. But, here’s the catch: before we can fill the jars with His pure and refreshing water, we must first EMPTY our jars of all the impurities caked up inside them due to sin. We must clean them out by 1st humbly acknowledging our sins and allowing our Lord to purify us through Sacramental Confession. Once emptied of impurities, we’re then prepared to receive the super-abundant gift of Living Water – the Grace of Jesus Christ poured out to us from His side upon the Cross - to the brim! And, through our humble response to his grace, these refreshing waters are turned into the fine wine of Divine love. It’s all made possible through His humble self-emptying. Again, it is through the humble YES of the Virgin Mary that Jesus is born into the very world He created – and into our souls – that He created – and through His faithful children, His Light shines out to a world in darkness. Our “inner-man” is filled with Divine Life and we truly become “children of the Light.”

**REMINDER: NEXT SUNDAY DECEMBER 11th ST. ANNE’S SOCIETY WILL MEET
IN THE CHURCH HALL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 5:00 pm THE MASS.
DR. JOAN KELLY WILL BE RETURNING — ALL ARE WELCOME!!!**