Most Rev. James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen

Most Rev. Paul G. Bootkoski, D.D.
Bishop Emeritus

Rev. Msgr. Robert J. Zamorski, Rector
Rev. Gerard Paderon, Parochial Vicar
Rev. John Kavas, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Edmund Luciano, III, In Residence

Deacon J.P. Saggese
Deacon Rick Fortune
Deacon Emeritus Frank J. Cammarano
Deacon Emeritus Paul G. Licameli
Deacon Emeritus Guido J. Brossoni
Deacon Emeritus Ed Olegario, M.D.

WEEKEND MASSES
Saturday Vigil 5:00 and 7:00 pm
Sunday 7:30, 9:00, 10:30 am; 12:00 noon

HOLY DAY MASSES
Vigil 5:00 pm
Feast Day 7:00, 8:00 am; 12:10, 7:00 pm

WEEKDAY MASSES
Monday-Friday 7:00, 8:00 am;
12:10 pm (Rosary 11:45 am)
Thursday 7:30 pm Communion Serv. monthly
Saturday 8:00 am

MORNING PRAYER Monday-Friday 7:40 am

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION 7:00am—11:00pm
(Monday—Friday) Lady Chapel - Parish Center

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Penance)
Saturdays 1:00-2:00 pm and 6:00-6:30 pm
or by appointment.
NEW PARISHIONERS are welcome to register by completing a form available in our Parish Office as soon as possible after moving to the area.

EUCHARIST FOR SICK/HOMEBOUND: Phone Rectory (548-0100) and arrangements will be made.

BAPTISM: 1:30 pm by appointment only (most Sundays)
Baptismal Seminar: Pre-registration is required. Attendance during pregnancy is preferable. 7:45 pm, Rectory Meeting Room.

MARRIAGE: Registered parishioner(s) preparing for marriage should contact the rectory one year in advance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES: Mon, Thurs: 4:00 - 5:05 pm.; Tuesday evening: (8th grade) 6:30 - 7:35 pm.

MARIAN NOVENA/ROSARY: Saturdays after 8:00 am Mass.

R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) - Those wishing to learn more about/be received into the Catholic Faith - please phone 548-0100. (Sara Sharlow).

SPONSORSHIP: Active practice of the faith, together with registration, is necessary for sponsorship certificates and, possibly, the administration of some sacraments.

Parish Contacts
-COORDINATORS -
-Advocates for Disabled: Jane Conlon & Janet Onufer Michael (548-0100)
-Lectors: Jerry LaPointe - pandj57@aol.com
-Ushers: Tom Hansen (548-0100)

- PARISH GROUPS -
-Adult Acolytes: John Grigo (548-0100)
-Body of Christ Prayer Group: PamGendlek-pzgendlek@comcast.net
-Cathedral Choirs: Folk - Steve Kirbos - steve@kirbos.net; Thom DeLessio:548-0100 x 235
-Eucharistic Adoration: Marie D’Amico - dghmad@aol.com
-Evangelization: Ralph Quaglia-rquaglia19@gmail.com
-Filipino/American Families: Gil Vendiola & Helen Vendiola (548-0100)
-Greeters: Robert/Susan Riolo (548-0100)
-Home School Assn. Co-Presidents: Jenn Cascio/ Kathleen Gwozdz - HSA@stfranciscathedralschool.org
-Knights of Columbus: KofC3272.webs.com
-Legion of Mary: Wed. 7:00 p.m.- Rod Altz (548-0100)
-Marriage Encounter: Russ and Janet Baker - jnrbaker@optonline.net
-Marriage Prep: Pam Schleck-schleckfamily@gmail.com
-Mens’ Group: Tom Thomas-sfc.mensgroup@gmail.com
-MOMS Group: Sandra Spinelli (548-0100 )
-Parish Historical Guild: Rod Altz (548-0100)
-Parish Prayer Tree: Belinda Coakes-sfprayertree@msn.com
-Rosary Altar Society: Carmela Guarnera (548-0100)
-Scripture Study: Pat Morgan - (548-0100)
-Widows/Widowers: naunijud@hotmail.com

- SOCIAL MINISTRY - 548-0100 x225
-Support Groups (as scheduled):
  Bereavement    Separated/Divorced  Caregivers
  Prayer Shawl Ministry
  Pro Life: contact Elaine Yunker - elbo1974@yahoo.com
  Nat Fam Planning Hotline- 800-334-0699/562-1990 x1623
  Ozanam (Provide-A-Meal) Committee
  Friendly Visitors (Visit with elderly or homebound)
  Elizabeth Ministry(Share sanctity of life with mothers/mothers-to-be)
  Social Concerns Committee (Serves the poor confidentially)
  Intrfaith Network of Care(Volunteers for homebound/caregivers)
  Unemployment Support Group (Networking)
Masses For The Week...

SUNDAY, December 25 - Christmas Day
8:00am - Mass of Christmas
10:00am - Most Rev. Edward T. Hughes - 4th Anniversary
12:00 Noon - Mass of Christmas

MONDAY, December 26 - Saint Stephen
9:00am - Florencio Coquia r/o Roger & Pina Coquia

TUESDAY, December 27 - Saint John
7:00am - Irene Gazda r/o Michael White
8:00am - John Getty r/o Wife Barbara Getty
12:10pm - Augustine & Filomena Eosso r/o Family

WEDNESDAY, December 28 - The Holy Innocents
7:00am - Joan Stone r/o Carolyn & Ralph Quaglia
8:00am - Timothy Fedak r/o Family
12:10pm - Jonathan Policarpio r/o Myla & Friends

THURSDAY, December 29 - St. Thomas Becket
7:00am - Virgil Winkler r/o Son Kurt Winkler
8:00am - Sophie Sendziak r/o Sam & Elaine Convery
12:10pm - Fabian Gonzalez r/o Basco Family

FRIDAY, December 30 - The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
7:00am - Raphael Almonte r/o Family
8:00am - Kathleen Zipf r/o Rod & Dolores Altz
12:10pm - (Liv.) Int. Mr. & Mrs. Renato Razal r/o Family

SATURDAY, December 31 - Pope Saint Sylvester I
8:00am - Margaret Cheche r/o Marc Greenberger

Mary, The Holy Mother of God
SAT. Vigil - 5:00pm - Cuppari Family r/o Maria & Augustino Pugliese
SAT. Vigil - 7:00pm - Giovanni Vinci r/o Rosalia Vinci

SUNDAY, January 1 - Civil New Year's Day
7:30am - Marie Petrick r/o Jerry & Marlene Yaros
9:00am - Frank Burke r/o Dolores Schneller
10:30am - Bob Flaherty r/o Terry Kohl
Noon - Peter Trecolis r/o Carol & Lenny Klein

The Sanctuary Candles for this week have been donated in loving memory of Karl Kerber by James & Brenda O’Connor & Grandchildren (In the Cathedral) & (in The Lady Chapel)
SERVING OVERSEAS: In Germany: John-David Rizzuto; and for all those serving in Covert Operations


DECEASED: Jane Horbich, Ricardo Rincon, Joan Pilger, Albert Morgan, Mildred Huxta, Stanley Glodek, Patricia “Tina” Felter, Marcello (Jerry) Bozio

...and all those recommended in the Book of Intentions

GOD’S PLAN FOR GIVING

Thank you for your generosity the weekend of 12/18:

- Envelopes & Loose Cash: $19,883
- Electronic Offerings: $5,359
- Total: $25,242

Please consider using our parish e-Giving program. To sign up, go to http://www.stfranciscathedral.org/FaithDirect/

Attention Eucharistic Ministers: Regular Mass assignments (Week 1 Teams) will be in place for New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day. Thank you for serving.

Opportunities For Memorials

Did you know that in addition to Mass intentions for your loved ones you may remember them through the following memorial opportunities:

- **Altar Flowers**: Available weekly in The Cathedral at the High Altar for memorials, weddings and other occasions. (Please contact the Rectory for details and availability.)

- **Sanctuary Candles**: available weekly in The Cathedral and The Lady Chapel. (Donation: $20. Enclose in envelope with information and place in collection basket or mail to Rectory.)

- **Msgr. Behl St. Francis School Endowment and The St. Francis Scholarship Fund**: Memorial gifts may be made to either of these funds which are used to enhance the academic excellence of the parish school and offer tuition assistance. Please inquire at the parish or school office for further information.

- **The Cathedral Music Ministry Fund**: Memorials in the name of loved ones may be made to support the Cathedral music ministry and choirs. Memorialize a Hymnal at a cost of $20 per book. Please inquire at the parish office.

If interested, phone Rectory at 732-548-0100 x210.

Youth Group News

- **Dec. 25: Christmas Day** - no meeting. A Blessed Christmas to all from the Youth Groups.
- **Jan. 1: New Year’s Day** - no meeting. Happy Holy New Year
- **Jan. 6: Ice Skating** at Roosevelt Park for both YG. Parents drop off at 5:00pm and pick up at 8:00pm. Cost p/p $5.50 to skate and $5 skate rental.
- **Jan. 7: Foodbank** in Hillside from 9:00am - 1:00pm to help the poor and those in need.
- **Jan.8: MSYG Meeting, 6:30 - 8:00pm, CYO.** Celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord with prayers and by bringing a wrapped gift for the poor children in Philadelphia.
- **Jan. 14: MSYG trip to Veterans Home** to visit with those who have served our country. Arrive at 10:00am and return to Metuchen at 1:00pm.
- **Rent-A-Team-Of-Teens**: A volunteer program to help with 4-season indoor/outdoor clean-ups. It can be used for helping with winter cleaning or chores. No cost to you but donations gladly accepted. Call Sister Maria Lan:732-770-2506.
Parish Notes...

–In observance of Christmas, the Rectory Office will remain closed on Monday, December 26. There will be one Mass on Monday, celebrated at 9:00am. Monsignor Zamorski and the entire staff wish you and yours a very Blessed Christmas.

-- Eucharistic Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Lady Chapel will resume on Monday, December 26 at 7:00am.

–There will be no CCD classes this week in observance of the Christmas holidays. Religious Education classes will resume on Tuesday, January 3.

2017 calendars are available at Cathedral entrances for our parishioners. We are grateful to Costello-Runyon Funeral Home and to Flynn & Sons Funeral Homes for their kindness in providing the calendars.

–On New Year’s Eve, confessions will be heard at regular times, 1:00 - 2:00pm and 6:00 - 6:30pm. New Year Masses will follow the usual Saturday vigil and Sunday schedule.

Christmas Flower Envelopes are available at Cathedral entrances for those who wish to contribute to the Christmas decorations. These donations may be made in memory of or in honor of a loved one or simply as a gift to the Church. Please indicate your intention on the envelope. The list will be published during the Christmas season.

My Dear Parishioners,

God’s generosity is limitless and unconditional, and together we give Him thanks for the blessing of each other. This year is another opportunity to appreciate his goodness to us by the way we reflect our love for one another in his holy Name.

We give thanks to everyone who help us to celebrate life during this Christmas season and all year long. The Lord’s grace is evident every day at Saint Francis Cathedral Parish through the unselfish efforts of so many parishioners. There are so many unsung servants of God who make up our parish family; they do not want recognition. However, we do thank our Lord for them, and we assure them of our prayerful intercession for them and their intentions every day.

May you have a most Blessed Christmas and abundant New Year! May our Blessed Mother’s trusting faith grace your lives with certain hope into the future, and the protection of your families and loved ones. May our children find safety and warm comfort in our loving arms in order that they may realize God’s love for them.

Msgr. Bob Zamorski

Mary, The Holy Mother of God
New Year’s

Eve: Saturday, Dec. 31
Masses at 5:00 & 7:00pm

Day: Sunday, January 1
Masses at 7:30am, 9:00am
10:30am, Noon
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2016

Most Rev. James F. Checchio

At Christmas one of the most faith-filled scenes that can be found in homes, churches, and communities throughout the world is the Nativity, a reminder that Christmas should be centered on the birth of Christ and Christ should be the center of our lives.

It was St. Francis of Assisi, for whom our cathedral is named, who is credited with having created the first Nativity scene. He had a deep devotion to the Infant Jesus and on Christmas eve 1223 re-created the first live Nativity scene in a cave outside the town of Greccio, Italy.

What St. Francis wanted to do was to help people see with their bodily eyes what Jesus’ original coming was like. He wanted people to realize that the Babe of Bethlehem, the name he called the Infant Jesus, was born in poverty, humility and simplicity. So, with the help of a friend and landowner, Giovanni Velita, St. Francis constructed a manger, filled it with hay, and brought in an ox and donkey from a local farm. Then, he and his Franciscan brothers invited all the townspeople to come to the manger on Christmas eve. That night, they lit candles, sang songs and then had Mass at the manger he had built. - - and St. Francis, since he was a deacon, sang the Gospel of Christ’s birth, and he preached about the birth of the poor king, born in Bethlehem, in a manger, like the one they were standing in. Contrary to our custom and popular belief, St. Francis used no statues of Jesus or Mary or the baby Jesus - nor did he recruit live actors to play those parts; he used no shepherds or angels or wise men, nor kings.

St. Francis' friend, Thomas of Celana, wrote in his journal that Christmas eve before going to bed, "Greccio was transformed into a second Bethlehem, and that night, wonderful night, seemed like the fullest day to both man and beast for the joy they felt at the renewing of the mystery...." Having lived in Rome for almost 20 years, Greccio was a place I enjoyed visiting, and it gratefully maintains that spiritual atmosphere to this day.

Today, 800 years later, the Nativity lives on not only in Greccio but around the world, and it often can be the one thing which touches our hearts most at Christmas. At live Nativity plays and scenes, not only children but adults can be awestruck as they are transported back to the see and feel, the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. In Catholic schools and churches children's Christmas pageants, with their simplicity and innocence, can bring people to tears as it reminds them of the true meaning of Christmas. In homes everywhere families carry out the tradition of setting up their Nativity with the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, shepherds, ox and donkey. In Rome, on the third Sunday of Advent, there is a beautiful tradition that the children of Rome bring the "bambinelli" (baby Jesus from their Nativity scenes) to St. Peter's Square for the Holy Father to bless them. It is a sea of bambinelli, and a beautiful sight. The Roman children then place the Infant Jesus in the manager in their homes on Christmas eve.
Yes, I'm sure we all have our memories of how the Nativity has had an impact on our life. I have my memories of Greccio and the third Sunday of Advent blessings by the Holy Father, and another one which occurred when I arrived in Rome as a seminarian. One of the first things we did was to go out to visit the Catacombs of Santa Priscilla on the Via Salaria. In there is a fresco from the 200's. It is of the Blessed Mother with the infant Jesus resting His head on her. There is a man standing next to her and he is pointing upward to a star which for the Jewish people is a symbol for the Messiah. The fresco is the earliest representation that we have of the Blessed Mother. It also tells the story of the mystery of the incarnation, of Mary becoming the mother of our Savior, and the fulfillment of the Divine promise for a Messiah.

I remember being struck that the fresco was the oldest image of Our Lady. I thought, too, about the people in the third century who were here in this catacomb painting this picture to commemorate our faith. I remember thinking how blessed we are to celebrate Christmas in freedom, even though in many places throughout the world Christians are not allowed to do so. Indeed, many refugees today are from places where they are persecuted for being Christians.

Pope Francis talked about the symbolism of the Nativity scene just last Friday when he thanked the donors of this year's Vatican Christmas tree which was lit and Nativity scene unveiled on Dec. 9, in St. Peter's Square. He said that the Nativity scene "set up in churches, in homes and in so many public places are an invitation to make room in our life and in society for God, hidden in the face of many persons who are in conditions of hardship, of poverty and of tribulation."

The Holy Father added, "the crib and the tree are a message of hope and of love, and they help to create a favorable Christmas atmosphere to live with faith the mystery of the Birth of the Redeemer, who came on earth with simplicity and meekness." He said we should be attracted to the Nativity scene "with the spirit of children, because there we understand God's goodness and contemplate His mercy."

This Christmas will certainly be another memorable one for me. I am told there is a most beautiful Nativity in our Cathedral and I look forward to praying before the Babe of Bethlehem in our little town of Metuchen, and will be remembering all of you on my first Christmas with you.

It is my prayer that the Christ Child will be the center of your Christmas and life, that each Nativity scene you see will give you a sense of wonder and awe, and remind you that Christ should be the center of your life not only at Christmas but all year long. A Blessed Christmas to you all!

The Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen
Baby Bottle Blessings: On the weekend of December 10/11, empty baby bottles were distributed at all Masses. We ask that you fill them with spare change/money during the Christmas season and return them by Jan. 8. Proceeds will benefit Life Choices Resource Center in Metuchen. Please pray for the women/children who will be helped by your donations.

Marriage Encounter: For a truly meaningful and long-lasting Christmas present, why not give your spouse the gift of a Marriage Encounter Weekend? Such a weekend gives you the time and tools to revitalize romance, deepen communication and nourish the spirituality in your marriage. The Next WWMEW is Jan. 13 - 15, 2017 www.aweekendforyourmarriage.org /732-904-9636.

Keep Jesus Company and help keep Eucharistic Adoration on-going at SFC. There are several hours lacking committed adorers, and those emboldened are especially Critical.

“O Come Let Us Adore Him”

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Contact Marie D’Amico: dghmad@aol.com.

A BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Today we celebrate the great love that God has for each of us in the giving of His Son. We wish you and your family a joyous Christmas! If you are visiting us for the first time, we welcome you and invite you to return! Do you have questions about Jesus – His life – His message – His promises? Inquiry Sessions exploring these and other issues in relation to our Catholic belief are held every week. Come and See (or bring someone you know who might be searching.) Inquiry sessions DO NOT assume a commitment to join the Catholic faith family. Inquiry sessions are opportunities to ask questions about God, Jesus, the Catholic Faith. All who are unbaptized, baptized into another faith denomination, or baptized Catholic but have not received Eucharist or Confirmation, are invited. Inquiry sessions are for those who wish to inquire, explore, and search for ways to grow in relationship with God. For more information, call Sara at RCIA – 732-562-1990 x 1633.

Thank you and your fellow parishioners for your kindness on World Mission Sunday. St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral’s offering of $9,465 will be used to help the Church’s missionaries be the heart, hands and the voice of Christ to the suffering poor during 2017. May our Lord give to you, your families, and your parish as you have given to others so that His Good News may be offered worldwide.

—Mission Office

Cathedral Christmas Concert

Looking for a way to begin the New Year by sharing in an experience that draws family a little closer in love, values and faith? Enjoy the angelic harmonies of the St. Francis Cathedral adult, youth, children and handbell choirs at their annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, January 8 at 6:30pm. With an entertaining mix of new songs and Christmas favorites, expect the whole family to feel their hearts warmed and spirits lifted. No tickets are required but a free will offering will be taken. This year’s concert is performed in memory of Msgr. Behl. Net proceeds will be divided evenly between music ministry and The Monsignor Richard A. Behl Endowment Fund of St. Francis Cathedral School. For further info, see http://www.stfranciscathedral.org/or call 732-548-0100 x235.

Pro Life Corner: Rally for Life

The Diocese of Metuchen’s Respect for Life office will be running a bus trip to Trenton for the Rally for Life on Monday, January 23, 2017. This event is for those whose schedules do not permit an entire day in Washington, D.C. on Friday, January 27. There are two different days this year because of the timing of the Presidential Inauguration. Passengers must reserve their seats for the bus ride which is free of charge. Travelers will board the bus at the Diocesan Center, Piscataway at 9:30am. The Rally at the NJ State House begins at 11:00am and ends at 1:00pm. The bus will return to the Diocesan Center between 2:00 & 2:30pm. If you have any questions or would like to reserve a seat, please email amarshall@diometuchen.org.

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, January 27, 2017
March for Life, Washington, D.C.
Elaine Yunker: 732-754-3692
Accepting Reservations at this time
2016 Christmas Flower Donations

We are grateful to so many parishioners who have contributed to the Collection for Christmas Flowers

In Memory Of

Enid Lillian George
LuLu Polvere
Annette Amodeo
Stanley & Marie Figurski
Ralph & Jenny Battaglia
Thomas & Florence Murtaugh
Nicholas L. Santowasso
Mark Michel
Marlene Michel
Floyd Michel, Sr.
Howard Schwalje
Patricia Sacco
Frank & Anna Gurovich
Charles & Josephine Schwalje
Carole Mongelli
Mary Prebula
Joseph Dobrowolski
David Bixel
Mary & Walter Niedbala
Evelyn Pagano
Hazel Moody
Grigo & Lonczzak Family
Carlton “Joe” Killian
Ludmilla “Lee” Romero
Sal Bonanno
Peter & Mae Salomone
Albert DiLello
Giuliana Velona
Sonny Perullo
Mom & Dad Perullo
Msgr. Richard Behl
Nellie Lis
Bernard J. Lis
William R. Simms
Ceila Simms
Stanley Laurich
Doris & Ralph Borrello
Mark Byelick
Jack & Rita Peterson
Gene Filik
The Neun Family
Charles & Catherine Pahira
John & Jeanette Pahira
The Peterson Family
Anna & Louis Horvath
Judy & Orlow Eichman
Stella Schweighardt
Patricia Cirigliano
DeGeorge & Lewczuk Families
All Souls in Purgatory
Moczula/Varley Families
Thomas Thompson
Tripod & Payne Families

Eucharistic Ministers:
Dec.31/Jan1
5:00pm: C. Coleman, L. Dalton, S. Francis, J. Franklin, C. Saggese, S. Tamasco, D. Reilly
7:00pm: J. Pasquale, J. GCampbell, M. & W. Manza, N. Davis, J. Bundoc
7:30am: C. Kozak, D. Monek, J. Carey, J./K. Burke, S. Riolo, R. Dowdy
9:00am: R. Altz, R. Quaglia, A. Cirelli, L. Moriarty, P. John
10:30am: F. Belmont, S./A. Silva, C. Grant, R. & R. Coquia, M. Garni, J. D'Auria, D. Pappalardo, A. Bianchini
12:00pm: M. Kolомatis, E. Swan P. Morgan, D. Rossi, S. Fernandez, J. & M. Hernandez, R. Cron

Lectors: Dec. 31/Jan. 1
5:00pm: Al & Judy Kendziora
7:00: Jerry LaPointe
7:30am: Kathleen Burke
9:00am: Russel Lawyer
10:30am: Michael McCunney
12:00pm: Joachim Licameli

Altar Servers: Dec.31/Jan. 1
5:00pm Team 16
7:00pm Team 17
7:30am Team 18
9:00am Team 19
10:30am Team 20
12:00pm Team 21

What does love look like?
It has feet to go to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of others.
–Saint Augustine

Wishing you a Blessed Christmas...