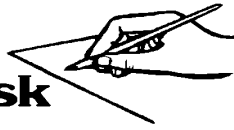


# From the Pastor's Desk



Fourth Sunday of Advent  
December 20, 2015

*“And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”*

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, quickly approaching our celebration of the birth of the Son of God, we need to open ourselves to receive this same intensity from the Holy Spirit. This same Holy Spirit overshadows, inspires, and prompts those of us who believe to “set out” “in haste” to touch others with divine Presence. Elizabeth blesses Mary because she “believed” that God would fulfill in her all that the angel Gabriel had said to her. Now so must we believe that God fulfills in us all the goodness and love that is promised.

Salvation is the convergence of God’s will. Like Mary and Elizabeth, we must not say no to what God asks of us. Mary and Elizabeth shows us what it is like to be overshadowed by the Spirit by their offering of themselves in cooperating with God’s plan of salvation. So must we offer ourselves with the same willingness, with the same love response, with the same eager desire for divine Presence within and among us. This divine Presence is never gone, never absent. We cannot ever forget that.

God’s plan of salvation is fulfilled by Christ’s obedience to the Father’s will. Think about this: doing God’s will is an incarnation of divine Presence! The circumstances of our self-giving won’t be as spectacular as Mary’s and Elizabeth’s, but giving ourselves over to God’s will is no less fruitful. In our helping hand, God is present. In our visits to the sick God is present. In all our daily dying to self, God is present. This is incarnation: God is present. This is the depth of the Christian mystery: we, too, incarnate divine Presence!

On behalf of the Staff, we like to extend to you and your families a Blessed Christmas. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the wonderful people of St. Ephrem Parish. Thank you for all your support, encouragement and your faith. You continue to overwhelm us by your generosity: of your talent, time and treasure you share with the parish family of St. Ephrem. Thank you and God Bless You!

In the Good Shepherd,

*Fr. Robert*



## church support

December 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2015:	\$13,996.00	336 Envelopes
December 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	\$11,986.00	364 Envelopes
We Share (Online Giving)	\$225.00	10 Families

*Thank you for your generosity to St. Ephrem Parish!*



<b><u>Parish Goal:</u></b>	<b>\$980,000.00</b>
<b><u>Amount Pledged:</u></b>	<b>\$1,096,984.00</b>
<b><u>Paid to Date:</u></b>	<b>\$361,036.19</b>

*Your generosity to our Diocese and to our Parish continues to make a difference. Thank You!*

**December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016**



JUBILEE OF MERCY

*“We constantly need to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a well spring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it.”*

**Pope Francis**

### Holy Door Opens For the Year of Mercy



May all who walk through during this special Holy Year of Mercy, may we open ourselves to the God who is “rich in mercy.” Jesus is looking at us with the eyes of mercy, asking us to believe in him and trust him. He is asking us to entrust our lives to him, confident that he will forgive our sins and open for us the door of mercy in the house of his heavenly Father.

May this Holy Year of Mercy be for us and for our entire Church a time of grace and joy. And may Mary, the Mother of Mercy, accompany us along the way.

### Corporal Works of Mercy in Action



St. Ephrem Church will be collecting non-perishable food items for the OLPH Food Pantry after all weekend Masses, December 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your usual generosity!!!!

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." - Lk 1:41-42*

*Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.*

### Mass Intentions for the Week

**Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>:**

8:45am Maria Iannizzi & Mary Dente  
 5:00pm Clement McHugh  
 Maddalena and Ilario Piscioneri  
 The Scudieri & Ruggiero Family

**Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>:**

8:00am Catherine Martell  
 10:00am Michael & Winifred McNamra  
 12:00pm Graffagnino & Savarese Families  
 5:00pm For the People of St. Ephrem's

**Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>:**

7:00am Eileen Daley (Living)  
 8:45am Deacon Wilfred N. Horne

**Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

7:00am Mr. James Monier  
 8:45am Marion A. Tedeschi

**Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>:**

7:00am Bobby Soldano  
 8:45am Michael F. Matheson

**Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>: (Christmas Eve)**

7:00am Sal & Lucy Coluccio  
 8:45am Anthony W. DeFina  
 5:00pm The Piscioti, Musillo & Schinina Families  
 12Midnight Antoinette Rinaldi

**Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup>: (Christmas)**

8:00am Sharon Pascale  
 10:00am Antonino Longo  
 12:00pm George J. Watt

**NO 5:00PM MASS**

**Saturday, December 26<sup>th</sup>:**

8:45am Magdalene Oszust  
 5:00pm Irene Dunn  
 Helen Thompson

**Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup>:**

8:00am John J. Tuohy  
 10:00am Domenick Mazzone  
 12:00pm Raymond Duffy, Jr.  
 5:00pm For the People of St. Ephrem's



Pietro Scarso, For the recovery of Christina Flood, Baby Girl Cameron King, Thomas Stephen Ryan, Paul Murphy, Vinny Amato, Edward O'Connor, Adrienne Jacobs, Miriam Ligammari



*THE ALTAR CANDLES AND THE SANCTUARY LAMP BURNING FOR THE WEEK HAVE BEEN DONATED IN LOVING MEMORY OF ANTHONY W. DEFINA, REQUESTED BY VINCENT AND JUDY RYAN.*



*THE BREAD AND WINE FOR ALL MASSES THIS WEEK HAVE BEEN DONATED IN LOVING MEMORY OF KATHRYN JOHNSTON, REQUESTED BY THE LIPSON FAMILY.*

### Wedding Banns

John Nielsen                      St. Ephrem  
 Kathleen Conlon                St. Anselm

**AN INVITATION TO MIDNIGHT MASS**



Our Christmas Eve Midnight Mass begins with a beautiful 'lessons and carols' ceremony at 11:30PM. The church is dimly lit when we begin, one of the two Ministers of The Word proclaims a reading while the altar servers light candles and the choir sings a corresponding Christmas carol. With each reading the candle light increases, and the music swells till we reach the Midnight hour and Mass begins with the singing of "O Come All Ye Faithful."

**CHOIR SCHEDULE**

12/20	10:00 Mass	Adult Choir
12/24	5:00 Mass	Children's Choir
	Midnight Mass	Adult Choir
12/25	12:00 Mass	Adult Choir
12/27	12:00 Mass	Adult Choir

**We are in need of your help!**



Can you smile? Can you be kind? Then you're perfect for this ministry. We want our parishioners and guests to feel welcomed and provide any assistance if needed. We can use your help providing this "red carpet treatment." Please consider joining this ministry. We are especially in need at the Saturday, 5 p.m. and Sunday, 5 p.m. Masses. Please contact Mr. Joseph Graffagnino (917) 922 – 5108.

**DECEMBER EVENTS AT THE SPIRITUALITY CENTER**

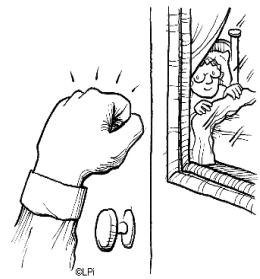
**Bereavement Support Group**

A new Bereavement Support Group will begin Monday, January 4 at 7:00 PM in the Spirituality Center. Sessions run on a 6 week cycle. If you recently lost a loved one and would like to join the group for some compassionate listening, honest sharing, and consoling prayer, please come to the Center. Individual (one on one) sessions are available on request.

**Spiritual Direction**

Please call Sister Ann at the Spirituality Center at 718-921-9518 for information or to make an appointment.

•



**OUR PRIESTS ARE VISITING THE HOMEBOUND**

During this time of year, it has been a tradition for the active priests of St. Ephrem Church to visit the homebound and offer them the Sacraments of Confession and Anointing of the Sick as well as Holy Communion. If you have a family member who is not able to come to

church and would like a visit from one of the priests, please submit their name, address and phone number to the parish office and you will be contacted in the coming weeks to set up a mutually convenient time for the visit. The next parish Anointing Mass will be Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.



**FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY PROGRAM**

Are you thinking about volunteering for a parish ministry? Are you already in ministry or part of the Parish Pastoral Council but

need an update on the teachings of the Catholic Church? Perhaps the Pastoral Institute's Foundations for Ministry Program is for you! This 10-week program, designed for adult learners, covers a different topic each week. For example, The Emerging Role of the Laity; Jesus: His Message, His Ministry; and One Church, Many Faces. Classes begin in January and are being offered at St. Ephrem in English; other sites will offer classes in Spanish, Haitian, Creole and Mandarin. If you are interested, please go to <http://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/pastoral-institute/foundations-ministry/> for more information and to register. Registrations online only! For more information you may also contact Eileen Maguire at the St. Ephrem Office of Faith Formation: (718)745-7486 or the Pastoral Institute at (718) 281-9556 or at [pastoralinstitute@diobrook.org](mailto:pastoralinstitute@diobrook.org).

**"Be An Angel" to a St. Ephrem Student**

The "Be An Angel Program" is one of the ways Futures In Education, a Diocesan organization, provides a student with need-based scholarship and the chance for a St. Ephrem parishioner to change the life of a child through a gift of a Catholic education. An 'Angel' is a concerned individual who provides sponsorship to a student in a Catholic school within our Diocese by providing partial tuition assistance starting at \$1500.00 per year. (St. Ephrem School Annual Tuition is \$4,575 per student) The Angel selects which Parish Elementary School they wish to assist. It is the sincere hope and prayer of our principal, Mr. Taormina, that you would select our school. There are many of our own students in need. For more information please call the school office at 718-833-1440.



**A Blessing For Your Baby Jesus**

You are invited to bring the baby Jesus from your home Nativity scene to church on the 4th Sunday of Advent, December 20, for a special

blessing that will be given at each of the Masses after Communion. In this way, your Nativity and home will be blessed for the holy days.



**Christmas Mass Schedule**

**Christmas Eve**

*Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>*

**5:00 PM**

With Children's Choir and Children's Hand Bell Choir

**11:30 PM "Lessons & Carols"**

Adult Choir

**12 Midnight Mass**

**Christmas Day**

*Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup>*

**8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, & 12 Noon**

*No Evening Mass*

We are currently seeking a core group of people to run a fundraiser with a "Mardi Gras" theme. The fundraiser should take place before Ash Wednesday and will be held in the gym. All proceeds will go to the parish. If you would like to coordinate this fun night, please call Lisa in the rectory at 718-833-1010.

**There be a meeting for all who want to be part of the committee on Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM in the Rectory Meeting Room. All are welcomed!**



*We wish you a Merry Christmas!*

**END OF BULLETIN**  
**ANY TEXT OR GRAPHICS ENTERED ON THIS PAGE**  
**WILL NOT APPEAR IN THE PRINTED BULLETIN**

CHURCH NAME: **Church of St. Ephrem**

CHURCH CITY: **Brooklyn, NY**

ROUTING CODE: **R**

RUN NUMBER: **13**

FILENAME: **03-0402.52b**

PHONE NUMBER: **718-833-1010**

FAX NUMBER: **718-921-5232**

EDITOR/ CONTACT: **Lisa Pinsky**

**CURRENT FORMAT: EBSWUN**

**Comments:**

---