

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW

Stewardship Report – Treasury
WEEKLY COLLECTION

<u>Budgeted Amount:</u>	\$5,000.00
<u>Sunday Collection – 12/24/17</u>	\$3,256.00
<u>Christmas Collection – 12/25/17</u>	\$6,569.00

Please support St. Monica’s Church by contributing to our Annual Campaign. Forms are located at the Church and Hall exits. We thank you for your generosity.

Campaign Statistics as of 12/6/2017

Total # of Households:	444
Total # Pledged:	70
% of Participation:	15.77%
Total Amount Pledged:	\$21,945.00
Total Amount Paid:	\$18,523.34
Average Pledge:	\$313.50
% of Pledges Collected:	84.41%

We are very grateful to those who have made a pledge to our Annual Campaign. As you can see from the report above, we are halfway to our goal of \$40,000. We hope that those who have not sent in their pledge would consider doing so. This campaign is vital to our parish each year in meeting our expenses and assessments. Whatever you can give is always greatly appreciated and we are sincerely grateful.

The Sanctuary Lamp is given this week:
In Memory of: John and Patrick O’Shea
Given by: Mike and Grace Casalino

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

1/1	MON:	10:00a	Theresa Wodziak
1/2	TUES:	9:00a	Marie Bilz
1/3	WED:	9:00a	No Mass Today
1/4	THU:	9:00a	People of the Parish
1/5	FRI:	9:00a	People of the Parish
1/6	SAT:	5:00p	Hilary Battaglia Jessie & Charles Hughes Bob Ulino
1/7	SUN:	8:00a	People of the Parish
		10:00a	Rose Polombo
		11:45a	Francisco Alegre

PLEASE NOTE THAT MASS ON MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST IS AT 10:00 AM TO OBSERVE THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD. It is NOT a holy day of obligation.

HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH
DECEMBER 31, 2017

WEEKLY/MONTHLY PARISH EVENTS

COFFEE & DONUTS – are served after 8:00 a.m. Mass on the first Sunday of each month in the Church Hall. All are invited to join us.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION –Wednesdays at 6:30pm in the Rectory Meeting Room. Weekly reading/ reflection of the Sunday Scriptures – fellowship time & refreshments follow.

ST. MONICA’S LEISURE GROUP - There will be no meetings of St. Monica's Leisure Group during the months of January and February. Meetings will resume beginning Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 12:00 noon in the Church Hall. We take this opportunity to thank our members for helping to make the Leisure Group a success during the past year, and look forward to getting together again in March.
--- Grace and Mike Casalino

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Rectory Meeting Room. The current book is entitled, “God of the Fairy Tale.”

Helping Hands meets the second Tuesday of every month in the Rectory Meeting Room at 7:30 p.m.

SPECIAL DEVOTIONS AT ST. MONICA’S

Novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal – every Tuesday after the 9:00 A.M. Mass.

Chaplet of the Divine Mercy - Every Friday after the 9:00 A.M. Mass.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – First Friday of the month after the 9:00 A.M. Mass until 10:00 A.M.

ST. MONICA’S CHURCH – Contact info

Phone # 973-875-4521 Fax # 973-875-7538

Parish office hours: 9:30– 1:30pm Mon-Fri

Website: www.stmonicasussex.org

Email: stmonica@ptd.net

THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON NEW YEAR’S DAY, JANUARY 1.

Deadline for bulletin submissions: Tuesday of each week for information to be printed on the following Sunday. Email to stmonica@ptd.net

READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Sunday - Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17

or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40
Monday - Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

Tuesday - 1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28

Wednesday - 1 Jn 2:29-3:6; Jn 1:29-34

Thursday - 1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42

First Friday - 1 Jn 3:11-21; Jn 1:43-51

First Saturday - 1 Jn 5:5-13; Mk 1:7-11 or Lk 3:23-38

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS:

MASS ATTENDANCE – It is a very important and an integral part of your son/daughter’s faith journey as they prepare for the reception of Confirmation. We ask that you make every effort to attend each week.

CALENDAR:

Saturday	Jan. 6 th	YM Class – beginning with the 5pm Mass, followed by a light dinner, then class Phase I & II –
Sunday	Jan 7th	Make-up class – 6:30 to 8:30 – no dinner

GRADES 7 & 8

CALENDAR:

Saturday	Jan. 6 th	Rel. Ed. Class – beginning with the 5pm Mass Followed by a light dinner then class 7 th & 8 th Gr.
Sunday	Jan. 7 th	Make-up class – 6:30 to 8:30 – no dinner

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Grades 1 and 2:

Sunday,	Jan. 14 th	Class – 9:30am to 11:30am
Sunday,	Jan. 28 th	Class – 9:30am to 11:30am

Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6:

Saturday	Jan. 6 th	Class – 9am to 11am
Saturday	Jan. 20 th	Class – 9am to 11am

WE WISH ALL OUR FAMILIES A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.

LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN – This is celebrated every Sunday at the 10am Mass. We encourage all families with children in Grades 1 to 4 to have your son/daughter participate in this as part of their faith formation. If anyone is interested in helping to teach our children in this important ministry, please call the rectory.



I wish to thank all the volunteers who helped make St. Monica’s so beautiful for the celebration of Christmas, especially those who helped with decorating the church, setting up the inside and outside Nativity scenes, purchasing and arranging the poinsettias, cleaning the church, and all those who helped in any way.

I also thank the Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Ushers and Altar Servers who gave extra time to serve at the masses. Thanks to the children who participated in the Annual Christmas Eve Pageant and to those who planned it. Many thanks to the members of the choir who devoted weeks of practice in order to make our Midnight Mass very special.

Finally, I thank our parishioners for the Christmas Flower Memorial donations which made it possible to purchase the poinsettias for the altar, and for everyone’s generosity during this Christmas season.

May God bless you and grant you a happy and healthy New Year!

Fr. Jan

HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

First Reading: Genesis 15:1-6, 21: 1-3

Abram shows us the Lord keeps His promises, for his offspring were indeed many, like the stars in heaven. We, too, must trust in the Lord, so like Abram, our families might prosper.

Second Reading: Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

By faith Abraham and Sarah were blessed with Isaac, and through him, many descendants because they trusted in God's promise and believed in what they could not see. We see that faith, trust and prayer bring forth God's miracles in our lives.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Jesus was brought to Jerusalem to be consecrated according to the law of Moses. A man named Simeon had learned he would not die until he had seen God's anointed. Upon seeing Jesus, he immediately declared he had witnessed "the glory of your people of Israel." The prophetess Anna also gave thanks and spoke of Jesus to all who would listen. Both recognized the power of Jesus, although he was still an infant.

HIS WORD TODAY by Rev. William J. Reilly

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
December 31, 2017

"They took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regards to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: 'Now Master you can let your servant go in peace.'"

How often we have attended a baptism, as parent, godparent, big brother or sister, relative or friend. Some assumed the role of Joseph and Mary, others that of Simeon, or Anna who prayed. Whatever our role, we are called to recognize the special presence of the Christ as they did. Joseph protected, Mary reflected, Simeon prayed and praised. We do too.

Pope Francis in his exhortation 'The Joy of Love' provides a terrific teaching as we bring one year to a close and turn the page to a new year of grace. He says, 'Family prayer is a special way of expressing and strengthening this paschal faith. A few minutes can be found each day to come together before the living God to tell him of our worries, to ask for the needs of our family, to pray for someone experiencing difficulty, to ask for help in showing love, to give thanks for life and for its blessings and to ask Our Lady to protect us beneath her maternal mantle. With a few simple words, this moment of prayer can do immense good for our families.'

As we hear of all the New Year's resolutions, may we see this as our priority.





... FROM THE DESK OF FR. JAN

What is Catholic Marriage?

Marriage is not only a social or a sexual relationship. Marriage is something much deeper, it is the unity of bodies, minds and souls and instituted by God. In the act of creation when God said, *“Let us make man in our image and likeness”* He did not only create human beings but he instituted marriage: *“God created man in his image; male and female he created them (Gn 1,27)”* and *“that is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body (Gn 2, 24)”*. It is important to underline that marriage - in the eyes of God - is a union between a man and a woman, not like some people say today that marriage can be a union between a man and a man or a woman and a woman. Further, when Jesus was asked by the Pharisees about divorce he replied: *...“the Creator made them male and female, and for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh...”*. He even added: *“what God united man must not separate (Mt 19,3-6)”*. Such marriage is a union and a commitment for life. This commitment for life very well expresses the words from the wedding vows which the bride and groom exchange: *“I take you... for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part”*. This is a pledge of selfless love which the bride and groom express to each other before God and the Church. This selfless love models and makes present the love of Christ, who gave himself in love for his people. As Christ loves the Church, so the husband should love his wife, and as Jesus completely sacrificed himself for us so the husband and wife should also totally commit to each other. Love is the essence of marriage because man was created for divine image of God who is love Himself.

For Catholics, marriage is not just a contract. Marriage is a sacred covenant between each spouse with each other and with God. In a marriage ceremony, it is not the priest who marries the couple, but rather it is the man and woman who marry each other. The two joining in matrimony are the ones conferring the sacrament upon each other and the priest or deacon is a witness of the Church. Marriage is then a loving, faithful, permanent union of husband and wife which mirrors Christ's sacrificial love for us. Because matrimony is a sacrament, spouses experience God's blessings and His infinite graces.

The purpose of marriage is the union of one male and one female in order to come closer to God and is the appropriate venue in which to bear children. Children are considered fruit of marriage and fruit of love, but the ability to bear children is not a prerequisite to marriage. A married couple is not required to have children, but the Church teaches that if there is no reason not to bear children that married couples should have children. Having children allows couples to participate as co-creators with God and is one of the greatest gifts given by God.

People of faith can get married and their marriages matter to God, to their children, to each other, and to their community. Marriage helps to create and to care for the next generation, it helps to satisfy a man's and a woman's deep human longing for a connection with each other, and children's longing to know and be known and to be loved by their own mother and father. Marriage works by fostering a sense of commitment, trust, fidelity, and cooperation between the couple. A Catholic Marriage is a gift from God but WE must pray for it, want it, and cooperate with God in order to live as God wants us to.