

Merry Christmas!

from

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST. MARY

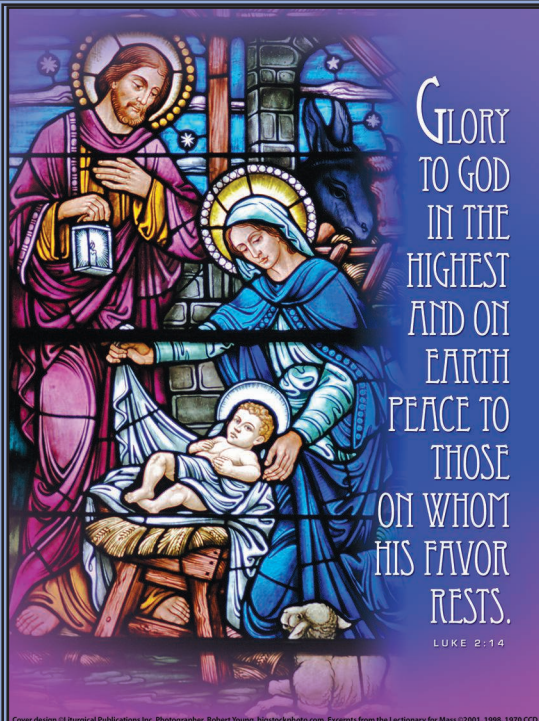
2001 Springdale Road
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

St. Mary Mission Statement

We, the Catholic community of St. Mary, are empowered through Baptism, guided by the Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist. We serve the People of God through active participation in the mission and ministry of the Church. We are committed to an inclusive and compassionate living out of the Gospel in our daily lives.

Reverend Ed Maher, Pastor

fatheredmaher@verizon.net



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christmas is a time for family, for coming home.

It is always such a joy to see everyone here at St. Mary, at our Christmas Masses. We wish it could happen more.

If you are with us regularly, we are happy and grateful to have you here. If you haven't been able to join us for awhile.... please consider coming back.

Is there something we can do to make you feel more at home? Questions you may have about faith matters, or church related issues? Is there some way we can better support you in your faith journey? We are here and we want to hear from you. Please let us know how we can help.

Our Savior's birth, at Christmas, reminds us of the immensity of God's love; of God's mercy. God spared nothing - sending his own Son to reconcile us to Himself; to give us life to the full!

Sharing the message of Christ' Gospel and uniting ourselves to Him in the Eucharist each Sunday, nourishes our spirit, deepening our relationship with Him and each other, and giving us everything we need to become more aware of the ways we meet Him each day. It enables us to be His presence for others, as well.

St. Mary offers a wide variety of ways to deepen our relationship with God. We would be happy to even begin new ministries for you and with you, beyond those listed here.

Please know that whether you are here regularly or not, you each remain always in our thoughts and our prayers.

May God bring you His peace and strength this Christmas, and throughout the coming year. May He guide each of us as we seek to bring that peace to our own little corner of the world.

Blessed Christmas!

The Priests, Deacons & Staff of St. Mary



OUR SACRAMENTAL LIFE

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Have you considered the miracle we have in the Eucharist? Before our very eyes, and in the depths of our hearts, Our Lord becomes truly and fully present. What an incredible gift! Every day, every Sunday, every holyday, we are all invited to this foretaste of heaven, as we come to the source of our life as Christians and are nourished and empowered to be Christ for all we meet. Our schedule of Masses is as follows. Please join us!

Daily Mass: Monday through Friday: 8:00 am (Chapel)

Weekend Masses: 5:00pm (Sat.), 8:00am, 10:00am, 11:30am **Korean Mass:** 5:00pm (Sunday)

Holy Days: 8:00am, 12:10pm, and 7:00pm

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

How are you living out your Baptismal vocation? In Marriage? Single life? Priesthood? Religious Life? All of these paths in life enable us to live out the call of Christ, given in Baptism, to bring his love, his peace, his mercy to the world. Through Baptism, we have been incorporated into the life of the Church; made living members of the Body of Christ in/for the world. What a joy it is to bring adults and children into this wondrous way of living. Baptisms are celebrated on the 1st Sunday (during the 11:30am Mass) and the 3rd Sunday (at 12:30pm), every month. Parents attend a special preparation session to aid them in the awesome responsibility they have to form their children as Catholic Christians. Please call the Parish Center for more information.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

God's mercy is unfathomable! Sin ruptures not only our relationship with God, but also with our brothers and sisters. Yet, God's offer of forgiveness is renewed each and every day. Through the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation), we encounter Christ, present in our midst, offering healing, forgiveness and renewed strength; reconciling us with Himself and each other. How long has it been for you? Our priests are here every Saturday at 8:30am & 10:00-10:30am. They would also be happy to meet with you, by appointment.

In Advent and Lent, we also have special Communal Penance Services, in union with the other parishes of Cherry Hill.

Come home, the Lord is waiting with open arms....

SACRAMENT OF HOLY MATRIMONY

Two truly become one, united in Christ Jesus forever, in the holy sacrament of Matrimony. When God is at the center of your love, blessings and strength abound. Our entire parish family rejoices when couples pledge themselves to each other, sanctifying their union within the celebration of the Eucharist. St. Mary offers couples, planning to marry, a preparation process which will aid them on their journey through life together. To make this preparation possible, we ask couples to contact us a year in advance of their wedding. (**If you would like to speak with a priest about the status of your marriage, please call the parish office anytime.*)

The seven sacraments are the signs & instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ the head throughout the Church which is his Body. The Church, then, both contains & communicates the invisible grace she signifies..

774-Catechism of the Catholic Church

DEVOTIONS AT ST. MARY

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

"Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you—for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart...Go, without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love (*St. Therese of Lisieux*). Spend some quiet time with our Precious Lord. Mondays in the Chapel, 9:00am-1:15pm. Occasional holy hours and benediction are also offered, throughout the year.

THE HOLY ROSARY

Catholics are sometimes misunderstood in their devotion to Mary, our Blessed Mother. While all Christians pray to God, we as Catholics have a tradition of asking Mary to join her prayer to ours, in intercession. Our Rosary comes out of that tradition. We encourage you to pray the Rosary personally, and we invite you to pray the Rosary, here with us, every Thursday after 8:00am Mass, in the Chapel.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross began as the practice of pious pilgrims to Jerusalem who would retrace the final journey of Jesus Christ to Calvary. Later, for the many who wanted to pass along the same route, but could not make the trip to Jerusalem, a practice developed that eventually took the form of the Stations of the Cross currently found in almost every church. (-Adapted/Taken from:<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/stations-of-the-cross/index.cfm>)

St. Mary prays varying forms of the Stations of the Cross every Friday evening, during Lent. Come, rediscover this ancient devotion and its implication for your life.

EVENINGS OF REFLECTION/ PARISH MISSION

Throughout the year, and especially in Lent, St. Mary offers special opportunities for reflection and prayer. Speakers and/or missionaries come to lead us to a deeper experience of the Presence of God in our daily lives. These special services are always announced in the bulletin and on our website which can be found on the last page.

FAITH FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL AGES!

BIBLE STUDY

Ever wondered how the Scriptures came to be written? What a particular passage means? Our Pastoral Associate, Kathleen Rando, conducts a monthly Bible Study to explore such questions. This year's focus is especially on the Mercy of God, found throughout the scriptures. We invite you to join us and deepen your understanding of the Word of God and its meaning for your life. For more info, please call Kathleen at (856) 424-0955.

SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Why go it alone? Companionship always make the journey more fulfilling. Deepen your faith and grow in your relationship with God as you gather in small groups with fellow parishioners, in the comfort of one of their homes. Reflect on the Sunday Gospel together with others and share how it touches your personal faith and story. Various days and times available. For more information, please contact: Kathleen at (856) 424-0955.

G.I.F.T. MINISTRY

St. Mary has a special gift among us.....our G.I.F.T. Ministry ("Growing in Faith Together"). These ministers sponsor evening presentations, a Book Discussion Group, periodic retreats, Christian outreach, and faith enhancing events, throughout the year. Look for their efforts in our Angel Tree at Christmas, and upcoming retreats, and a Lenten breakfast. Details are always in the bulletin and on our website.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Few things are as precious to us as our children. In and through their eyes, we see the future. At St. Mary, we try to do everything we can to assist young parents in their role as the first teachers of the Faith. Through the witness and sharing of our wonderful parish catechists, children in Grades 1-8, come to learn not just more *about* God, but also ways to deepen their relationship *with* Him. They are especially prepared to celebrate the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Confirmation, in order to strengthen them for their lifelong faith journey. Sessions are held weekly, September to May, afternoons and evenings. Please check the Religious Education tab, on our parish website, for more details.

R.C.I.A. (Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults)

Do you know someone who is interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith? Someone who was baptized but never made their First Communion or Confirmation? Then, we invite them to explore our RCIA. Our RCIA team meets weekly to share the tenets of our Faith, as well as the faith journey, with anyone interested in learning more and discerning whether they'd like to become Catholic (or complete their sacraments). Sessions are held on Wednesday evenings and special rites take place throughout the year. For more info, please call Kathleen at (856) 424-0955.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

With fun activities, songs, plays and crafts of all sorts, St. Mary invites children, ages 3-11, each summer, to spend a special week with Jesus. Under the direction of Valerie Mc Donald, this memorable and fun experience brings our children to the realization that there truly is "joy" in the Gospel. Look for details in the bulletin and on the website on how to participate in June, each year..... And... "let the children come.."

COMMUNITY BUILDING

"FOREVER YOUNG (55+)" SOCIALS MINISTRY

No one has to grow older alone when you are and remain *forever young* at heart. Are you 50 something or more? Enjoy good food, games, concerts, parties, and timely speakers? Looking for the company of other mature, fun-loving people? Then, this is for you! Our "Forever Young" ministry sponsors monthly socials on the Second Tuesday of each month, October to December, and February to June, in our parish hall. Delicious food, great company, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere are always at the heart of these events. Why not join them? Details of each event can always be found in the bulletin each weekend, and on the website.

YOUNG FAMILY EVENTS

St. Mary's support of young families extends beyond formation classes and includes special socials/events, throughout the year. Imagine the glow in your child's eyes, when he/she meets Mr. and Mrs. Santa in person, in our parish hall, for "Pizza with Santa", in December. Come back with them for an unforgettable visit with the Easter Bunny and an all out Easter Egg Hunt in Spring, too. Check the website and bulletin for these special events for your family!

AND, FOR OUR TWEENS & TEENS...

“Rock Solid” YOUTH GROUP

The faith of St. Mary’s teens is “rock solid”, founded in Christ Himself. Our parish Youth Group gathers our teens, throughout the year, for times of fun, service, and faith-sharing. Whether it’s making sandwiches for a homeless shelter, taking a snow-tubing trip, or gathering with teens from local parishes, our Youth Group helps our parish children navigate through their teens with faith and fun. All events for this special group are listed on parish webpage and also in the bulletin.

SOCIAL JUSTICE/SOCIAL ACTION

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVES

Christ poured out his blood to give us eternal life. Following in His footsteps, we can literally give someone the gift of life here, by donating ours. Each year, St. Mary hosts two Red Cross Blood Drives; one in March, and one in September. Under the coordination of Ron Von Stetina, volunteers gather to both assist with registrations and give blood themselves. Would you consider giving this gift of life to another? Details for how to contact Ron will appear in the bulletin, at least 6 weeks beforehand. Please look for them there.

CHERRY HILL FOOD PANTRY

“Whatever you do for the least of my people, you do for Me.” St Mary reaches out to the greater, local community by being an active member of the Cherry Hill Food Pantry, an interfaith effort to provide food to the poor and disadvantaged, right here in our midst. Parishioners bring food items to Mass with them on Sundays and volunteers transport them for us, to the Pantry. There, each parish takes a turn assisting with the sorting, stocking of shelves, and distribution of the food to those in need. This wonderful effort is just one of the ways our parish reaches out to Jesus, present in the poor. For more information, please contact Midge at (856) 234-2390.

I.H.O.C.

INTERFAITH HOMELESS OUTREACH COUNCIL

Another place where St. Mary meets Jesus is in the homeless men who come to reside in our parish hall for two weeks, each and every January. These men in transition from various life situations, are enrolled in the IHOC program, an interfaith effort to give them a “leg up” on getting on with their lives. While going out to work each day, the men sleep, meet and recreate here. Our parishioners provide delicious home cooked meals, overnight chaperones, visits, and fun activities. Our next turn to participate is coming up very soon. To participate or assist in any way, please contact Bill Schulze, (856) 778-0146.

PARISH NURSES

Sharing their time, and special gifts with each of us, our Parish Nurses can be found just off the Gathering Space, at the 5:00pm Saturday, 8:00am and 10:00am Masses, each and every third weekend of the month. Taking time from their busy lives, they patiently take Blood Pressure Readings for parishioners coming to them, in order to help ensure everyone at St. Mary stays healthy. Our parish nurses help St. Mary care for both the body and soul of each member. Look for them in the office, off the Church Gathering Space, each month.

FUN AND FUND TIMES

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Enjoy golfing? Want to help support our parish efforts? Then, come out in September, each year, for our parish Golf Outing and dinner. Great golf, great food and the opportunity to share and form friendships! Check the date & mark your calendar! You’ll be “teed” off & “green” with envy, if you miss it!

“NIGHT AT THE RACES”

Maybe you are just into “*horsing around*” a bit? The races come to St. Mary hall, each spring. Bring a friend, enjoy dinner and watch those horses run. There are chances to win fabulous prizes. Details for this event come out in early spring. Check the bulletin and plan to come. *We bet* you’ll have a great time!

THE 500 CLUB LIMITED GRAND RAFFLE

Wouldn’t it be *grand* to have a windfall come your way, just around the holidays? St. Mary’s annual Grand Raffle could help you do just that. As a fundraiser for our parish’s maintenance and outreach, the Raffle brings an opportunity to win BIG, just by participating. See details for this year’s December drawing and applications for tickets in the November/December bulletins, and on the bulletin tab on the website.

St. Mary Church Contact Information
Phone: (856) 424-1454 **Fax:** (856) 424-8270
Web: www.stmarycherryhill.org
Email: stmarycherryhill@verizon.net
Like us and follow us on face book!
Please see the link on our website!