

From Our Pastor

As all of you know, our former parochial vicar, Fr. Juan Gabriel Rojas, was reassigned to Saint Mary of the Assumption, Elizabeth, after his time here at Saint Helen. Since its founding in 1844, St. Mary of Assumption has served the Catholics of Elizabeth as a spiritual and pastoral center. Fr. Juan Gabriel is leading the effort to celebrate the 180th Anniversary of the parish and has asked for our assistance with the 50/50 raffle they will be running to raise much needed resources for the parish. The raffle will benefit their Buildings Restoration Fund. First prize is 25%, 2nd prize is 15% and 3rd prize is 10%. The winner need not be present. The drawing takes place on Sunday, May 19, 2024 and the donation requested is \$10.00. Tickets are available at our Reception Desk.

In 1844 there were few Catholics living in Elizabeth and no Catholic churches in the city. At that time construction of the now abandoned Central Railroad of New Jersey began. As local labor was scarce, the railroad company turned to Ireland as a source of workers. Over the 10-year construction period more and more Irish Catholics settled in the Elizabeth area. Catholics who needed to attend Sunday Mass had to travel to St. John's parish in Newark. The roads between Newark and Elizabeth were mostly just horse trails and, for the most part, those going to St. John's had to walk. In 1843, as the number of Catholics grew, the community petitioned Archbishop Hughes, Archbishop of New York, to establish a parish in Elizabeth as the

Diocese of Newark had yet to be established.

On Palm Sunday, 1844, the first Mass was held in a home on the corner of Rahway Ave. and DeHart Place. It was attended by about 25 people. This group gradually grew until it outgrew the residence and the group once again petitioned the Archbishop for permission to acquire land and build a proper church. A parcel of land on what would become Washington Avenue was selected and construction began in 1845. The parish community was to be designated St Mary of the Assumption Parish and by the first Sunday in Advent, 1845 enough of the church was ready and the first Mass was celebrated. The initial size of the community was now over 100 people and growing.

The parish continued to grow by leaps and bounds over the next century. They expanded the Church, and a school was added. Today, Saint Mary of the Assumption still stands serving those in Elizabeth in the tradition of serving the many immigrants that have come to this country. As they celebrate their 180th Anniversary, the needs to maintain and restore their buildings is great. If you would be so inclined to assist in this effort, as mentioned above, raffle tickets are available at the Reception Desk here at Saint Helen. Let's join St Mary's in celebrating their history and send them hope and prayers for their future.
God Bless You all,
Msgr. Tom



Parish Community of Saint Helen

Thanks for joining us today!



Weekday Mass Schedule

Monday - Saturday | 9am

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday | 5pm


Sunday 8am | 10am* | 12pm | 6pm

*Livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook

Reconciliation Saturday 4pm

Follow Us On Social

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 Parish Community of Saint Helen

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 @sainthelennj

New? Welcome!

We're so glad you are visiting us today! Text CONNECT to 908-860-8444 to get a virtual connect card and learn more about our parish community!

Have Kids?

We have amazing programs for kids at Saint Helen during our 10am Sunday Mass most weekends! Check out Kids Corner in Meaney Hall across the parking lot for ages 2 through Kindergarten. For Grades 1-4, we have Children's Liturgy of the Word at our 10am Sunday Mass most weekends.

Next Steps

Want to learn more? Visit sainthelen.org/more to learn more about our events and programs!

Msgr. Tom Nydegger, *Pastor*
March 3, 2024

SaintHelen.org
908-232-1214

What's Happening

Service Auction Returns

April 13, 2024 | 6:00pm in Meaney Hall

Planning for the 2024 Saint Helen Service Auction is underway to support The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless! We invite parish families to contribute to making this auction the most successful yet! The auction is accepting donations now and we are looking for your help: sainthelen.org/auction

Vacation Bible School

June 24-28, 2024 | 9:00am - 12:00pm

Join us this summer for Vacation Bible School!

Children entering grades K-5th will have a "splash"-making new friends, participating in service, crafts, playing games, and eating yummy snacks! Youth and Adult Volunteers Needed!!! Email Tracey Sowa at tsowa@sainthelen.org with questions.

Sister Pat’s Kids Camp 50/50

Please support Sr. Pat’s Kids Camp for children with cancer and other blood disorders! You can buy a 50/50 raffle ticket to help us fund camp. Tickets will be on sale from 2/3 to 3/10/24. Drawing is 3/17/24 after the 12pm mass. Thank you!

The Cameos Concert

SAVE THE DATE: May 11, 2024

Saint Helen presents New Jersey's premier 50's-60's doo-wop group "The Cameo's". Tickets on sale online at sainthelen.org/cameos, in-person February 20 at 10:30am at the parish office.

Men’s Prayer Breakfast

Are you an early riser in need of a Spiritual boost? Then this is for you. All are welcome to join us Wednesday mornings for an hour of prayer and reflection this Lenten season. Start a new journey to Easter with the Men of the Parish at 6:00am in Meaney Hall Room 102.

Divine Mercy

Explore the profound gift of Jesus's Divine Mercy in Lent's final weeks. Discover the Devotion, Chaplet, Divine Mercy Sunday, and Novena through resources on our parish website and in email blasts. Pamphlets available outside the chapel.

Mass Intentions

Weekend of March 2/3

5:00pm - Phillip Berlinsky

8:00am - Miriam Murphy

10:00am - Carmela Cavaleri

12:00pm - Elizabeth & Gustave Heeger

6:00pm - Reine & Nasri Rizk

Daily Mass Intentions

Mar 4- People of the Parish

Mar 5- Michael Hughes

Mar 6- Robert Olsen

Mar 7 - Paul Sowa

Mar 8 - Paul Sowa

Mar 9 - Helen & Peter McLaughlin

Weekly Mass Association:

Robert Sekowski

Michael Anthony Garone,Jr.

Peter Shukstis

Vincent Oliveri

Virginia Costigan

Florence Harris

Raymond Perry

Sanctuary Candle:

Luis Docabo

Loss of A Child Prayer Service

Sunday March 10, 2024, at 2:00pm

Church of the Little Flower Berkeley Heights, NJ

A time of prayer and remembrance for anyone who has lost a child for any reason, at any age, before or after birth.

Questions: reach out to bereavement.lf@gmail.com

The Mercy of God

As we celebrate the liturgical season of Lent, and prepare for the great joy of Easter, we find ourselves in what Pope Francis calls “a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God’s mercy.”

During Lent, by our acts of penitence and charity, we allow God to utterly crush our sins and cause them to be swept away by the ocean of divine mercy! But it is not our actions that “trample down our sins and toss them into the depths of the sea.” It is the grace of God, the merciful Father, that causes the effects of sin to be crushed and swept away so that we can live freely and share in the abundance of God’s love.

I am often struck by language people use to describe their approach to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist: I have to go to confession so that I can receive Holy Communion. One is an obligation and the other, a gift. While it is true that there are circumstances when I should receive Reconciliation before approaching the Eucharistic table, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is always a precious and undeserved gift!

Word and sacrament unite to show us the merciful face of the Father. Through meditation on the images in sacred Scripture, and through our direct experience of the presence of the triune God in all the sacraments, but especially in reconciliation and the holy Eucharist, we can celebrate and experience God’s infinite love and mercy.

Our experience of being loved and forgiven by God’s mercy can never be one-sided—all taking and no giving in return. As this penitential season reminds us, we must acknowledge both our sinfulness and God’s forgiveness by our prayer, fasting and charitable acts.

We celebrate and experience the merciful face of the Father in word and sacrament. We touch the grandeur of God’s mercy by our acts of penance and

Stay Connected

Text the keyword to 908-860-8444 :

- CONNECT - Connect card for guests
- FAMILY - CFC Family Ministry updates
- HELEN - General parish updates
- KIDS - Kids corner updates
- SERIES - Message series updates
- GIVE - Give to Saint Helen
- YASH - Young Adult event updates

Ways To Give

- Online at sainthelen.org/give
- Text GIVE to 908-860-8444
- Mail your contribution to:
1600 Rahway Avenue
Westfield, NJ 07090

Lenten Collections

To support our alms giving this Lent, our Parish will be collecting items needed by those less fortunate. They can be dropped off at the Church or Parish Center. Should the Center be locked, please use the black box by the kitchen door.

We will be collecting Rice and/or pasta (boxed if possible) this week.

charity. And, as a result, when we call out to the Lord, we can hear the answer, “Here I am,” which is always given by God, but not always heard by us because we are distracted by our sins.

This Lent let’s open our hearts to the Lord by meditating on God’s word, by encountering God’s love in the sacraments and by experiencing his presence through acts of penance and charity.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,
Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.