SECOND SUNDAY OF Advent

A voice cries out:
In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low.

Isaiah 40:3-4

DECEMBER 10, 2017

26 Dodgingtown Road, Bethel, CT 06801
Phone: (203)744-5777  Fax: (203)744-3740
www.stmarybethel.org
Visit us on Facebook: StMaryChurchBethel

PARISH OFFICE HOURS:
9am – 3:00 pm, Monday – Friday (Closed weekends and Holidays)
FATHER COREY’S EPISTLE

♦ On Saturday, December 9, His Excellency, The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, D.D. conferred the Ministry of Reader on Eric Keener and Richard Lawlor, who are continuing their diaconal formation. As instituted Readers, Rick and Eric will proclaim the Word in the liturgical assembly, instruct children and adults in the faith and prepare them to receive the sacraments worthily! Congratulations Eric and Rick!

♦ Some important items especially for the next couple of weeks:

Please take care when driving in the parking lot. It frankly is becoming more and more dangerous. No more than 15 MPH. Especially those dropping off and picking up for St. Mary School and St. Mary Religious Education Program. I realize that sometime we are late but speeding may cause someone their life. Even a little extra speed can be dangerous. Prevention is more important than a tragedy.

Now for the craziness concerning Christmas:
Christmas day, December 25 falls on a Monday this year. The 4th Sunday of Advent is December 24. It is impossible to decorate the Church between the last Mass on the 4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. As a result, all the Masses on the 4th Sunday of Advent will be celebrated in the School Gym.

I shall explain your Mass obligations. You must attend Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent by going to Mass on Saturday evening December 23rd at 5:30pm or the morning of December 24th. To fulfill your Christmas obligation, you must attend evening Masses on December 24th or the morning of December 25th. This year New Year’s Day is not a Holy Day of Obligation. Only two Masses will be celebrated on January 1st at 9:00am and 11:00am.

To put it in a nutshell the weekend of December 23 – 25 you must attend two Masses in order to fulfill your obligation. All extra Christmas confessions (including confessions on Saturday, December 23) will be heard in the Chapel at the Notre Dame Center (the former Convent). When planning your Christmas Mass remember that the 4:00pm on December 24th is usually very busy. Plan on arriving early. There a just so many parking spaces and once they are filled you will have to park on the streets surrounding the Parish Campus.

♦ Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Our Lady, as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, is responsible for the conversion of the Mexican people in the 16th c. when she appeared to St. Juan Diego, a peasant. The History, as taken from the Patron Saints Index website:
The Blessed Virgin appeared on Saturday 9 December 1531 to a 55 year old neophyte named Juan Diego, who was hurrying down Tepeyac hill to hear Mass in Mexico City. She sent him to Bishop Zumárraga to have a temple built where she stood. She was at the same place that evening and Sunday evening to get the bishop’s answer. The bishop did not immediately believe the messenger, had him cross-examined and watched, and he finally told him to ask the lady who said she was the mother of the true God for a sign. The neophyte agreed readily to ask for sign desired, and the bishop released him.

Juan was occupied all Monday with Bernardino, an uncle, who was dying of fever. Indian medicine had failed, and Bernardino seemed at death’s door. At daybreak on Tuesday December 12, Juan ran to nearby Saint James’s convent for a priest. To avoid the apparition and the untimely message to the bishop, he slipped round where the well chapel now stands. But the Blessed Virgin crossed down to meet him and said, "What road is this thou takest son?" A tender dialogue ensued. She reassured Juan about his uncle, to whom she also briefly appeared and instantly cured. Calling herself Holy Mary of Guadalupe she told Juan to return to the bishop. He asked the sign for the sign he required. Mary told him to go to the rocks and gather roses. Juan knew it was neither the time nor the place for roses, but he went and found them. Gathering many into the lap of his tilma, a long cloak or wrapper used by Mexican Indians, he came back. The Holy Mother rearranged the roses, and told him to keep them untouched and unseen until he reached the bishop. When he met with Zumárraga, Juan offered the sign to the bishop. As he unfolded his
ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 10, 2017

Thursday, 12/14
- 6:30am Mass
- 8:35am Rosary
- 9:00am Mass
- 7:00pm Adult Choir

Friday, 12/15
- 6:30am Mass
- 8:35am Rosary
- 9:00am Mass

Saturday, 12/16
- 8:00am Mass
- 8:30am Men's Ministry
- 4:00pm Confessions
- 5:30pm Mass

Sunday, 12/17
- 7:00am, 8:30am, 10:00am and 11:30am & 5:30pm Masses
- 8:30am Kinderword
- 9:30am RCIA

FATHER COREY’S EPISTLE

The life size figure of the Virgin Mother, just as Juan had described her, was glowing on the tilma. The picture was venerated, guarded in the bishop's chapel, and soon after carried in procession to the preliminary shrine. Her image (duplicated in the painting shown in the previous page), the nature of which is still unexplained by science, is extant today, though that tilma should have disintegrated centuries ago. It is kept in the "New Basilica" a few miles northeast of Mexico City, in the neighborhood of Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo.

This December 12th Feast remembers Our Lady's appearance to St. Juan Diego, and as she is Patroness of Americas, particularly Mexico, it is a very important Feast for those of the Americas to thank God for using His favorite daughter/mother/spouse in such a miraculous and effective way.

It is a good day, too, to also recall Our Lady's appearance at Fatima, her warning about Russia spreading "her errors," and the brutal reality of that prophecy come true, both in terms of literal Communism and in terms of cultural Marxism -- in Mexico, in Spain, in China, Cuba, Brazil, the Castilian Roses U.S.A., etc. Recall these two apparitions, study the history of Revolutions (from the traditional Catholic perspective), read papal encyclicals concerning Communism and Freemasonry, learn about the brave Mexican Cristeros who held out as best they could against Masonic revolution, and pray that all will come to know that Christ is King.

By the way, the miraculously blooming roses found by the now-Sainted Juan Diego were "Castilian Roses" (also called "Damascus Roses"), or Rosa damascena, which didn't grow in Mexico but were native to Spain.

♦ St. Lucy (Santa Lucia) was a young Sicilian girl who vowed to live as a virgin in devotion to Christ. Her mother, however, arranged a marriage for her to a pagan suitor. To dissuade her mom by proof of a miracle, Lucy prayed at the tomb of St. Agatha that her mother's hemorrhage would stop. When the miracle happened, her mother agreed to leave aside the topic of marriage.

Lucy's suitor, however, had other plans, and revealed Lucy as a Christian. Authorities went to collect her, planning on forcing her into prostitution -- but they were unable to budge her, even after tying her to a team of oxen. She was then tortured by having her eyes torn out. They'd planned on torturing her by fire, too, but the fires kept going out. She was then killed by being stabbed in the throat with a dagger.

Because of the above, St. Lucy is the patron of those with eye problems, and is often depicted carrying her eyes (often on a plate), being tied to a team of oxen, with St. Agatha, or before her judges. Her relics lay in Syracuse for hundreds of years, were translated to Constantinople, and then to Venice where they may be venerated at the Church of San Geremia. Her head was sent to Louis XII of France, and reposes in the cathedral of Bourges.

Her name, "Lucia," means "Light," and light plays a role in the customs of her Feast Day. In Italy, torchlight processions and bonfires mark her day, and bowls of a cooked wheat porridge known as cuccia is eaten because, during a famine, the people of Syracuse invoked St. Lucy, who interceded by sending a ship laden with grain (much as St. Joseph also did for the people of Sicily). Cuccia can be made so that it's savory or sweet. The wheat is most often simply soaked overnight, rinsed, simmered in water to cover by 2 inches for 3 hours or until tender, and then served with milk and sugar, much like oatmeal is. Or it can be a bit more elaborate:

Cuccia (Sweet) — 1 pound whole wheat, 10 ounces fig honey or other flavorful honey, dried orange peel, grated, chopped walnuts. Soak the grain in cold water for 24 hours, rinse it, and then boil it in water for three hours or until tender. Let it cool, then drain and return it to the fire with the honey, orange peel, and walnuts.

Some of the loveliest St. Lucy's Day customs are Swedish: in Sweden, the oldest daughter of a family will wake up before dawn on St. Lucy's Day and dress in a white gown for purity, often with a red sash as a sign of martyrdom. On her head she will wear a wreath of greenery and lit candles, and she is often accompanied by "starboys," her small brothers who are dressed in white gowns and cone-shaped hats that are decorated with gold stars, and carrying star-tipped wands. "St. Lucy" will go around her

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Recycling Truck

Recycling Truck

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Thank you for your generosity!!!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER SERVICE will NOT meet on this Wednesday. Please join us at the Parish Mission!

Our next meeting of the St. Mary MEN’S MINISTRY group will be on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 8:30am in the Parish Hall. For more information, email Craig DeFreese at acdefreese@snet.net or Eric Keener at stmarys06801@gmail.com.

On Sunday, December 17, we shall be celebrating the Roman tradition of BLESSING OF THE BAMBELLINI, the little or big statues of the Baby Jesus that are placed in our home Nativity scenes. We invite all parishioners to bring their Baby Jesus statues and they will be blessed at every Mass on that weekend.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATION if you wish to donate toward flowers for the Church in memory of loved ones, please put your donation along with the names in an envelope in the basket or bring it to the Rectory.

Offertory for the weekend of December 2/3
Collection: $12,082.00    On-Line Giving: $3,872.00

ST. MARY ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

We are very grateful for the generosity shown by so many to our Annual Collection. If you have not yet had the opportunity to return your pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. Every gift is welcomed and appreciated!

Thank you for your generosity!!!

Kinder‘word'

Learn about the Mass and hear stories of our faith! For children age 3 through First Grade. Every Sunday in the Parish Hall at 8:30am.
See you there!

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers

An Advent Mission Experience

At all the Masses the weekend of December 9/10 and at 7pm Mon., Dec. 11, Tues., Dec. 12 and Wed., Dec. 13 in the Church

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers – known around the world as the “Dynamic Deacon” – is one of the most sought-after speakers in the Church today. He is a powerful and passionate evangelist and preacher, whose no-nonsense approach to living and proclaiming the Catholic faith is sure to challenge and inspire those who hear him.

He travels across the United States and around the world speaking at conferences, workshops, retreats, parish missions, high schools, and young adult events – in short, to everyone who desires to know Jesus intimately and enjoy a deeper personal relationship with Him. His areas of expertise include marriage and family life, discerning the will of God, the sacraments, spirituality, pro-life issues, evangelization, prayer, and many others.

Deacon Harold holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics and Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame, and a Master of Theological Studies Degree from the University of Dallas. He co-hosts the weekly broadcast, “Living Stones,” every Monday on Mater Dei Radio, and has appeared as a guest on numerous other national and international radio programs, including “Catholic Answers Live” and “Vocation Boom Radio.” In addition, he is the host or co-host of several popular series on EWTN television. Deacon is featured on the award winning Chosen faith formation program by Ascension Press and the author of the best-selling book, Behold the Man: A Catholic Vision of Male Spirituality published by Ignatius Press, and co-author of the acclaimed new book, Ignite: Read the Bible Like Never Before.

Most importantly, he is married to his lovely wife, Colleen, and they have four beautiful children. They live in Portland, where Deacon Harold is assigned to Immaculate Heart Catholic Church.

For more information, please call (203)744-5777
St. Mary Church, 26 Dodgingtown Road, Bethel, CT
www.stmarybethel.org
On December 20th, Father Corey celebrates his 31st Anniversary as a priest. Congratulations Father and thank you for your commitment to the priesthood. You are an inspiration to us all!

Please stop by our PRE-K OPEN House on Tuesday, December 12 between 9:30 am - 11:00 am. You will be able to visit the classroom, meet our Pre-K faculty, and see for yourself why parents love our program! We anticipate strong interest for Pre-K again next year, so please plan on registering your child early. For the current school year, we still have a few openings in our PK 3 program. Please contact our Enrollment Director, Linda Garvey, at lgarvey@stmarybethelct.org if interested.

Attention all holiday shoppers: Season’s Greetings, we've just partnered with SHUTTERFLY to raise effortless funds for St. Mary School! Before you order your Christmas cards, photo books, prints and gifts this year, make sure you're shopping at sms.shutterflystorefront.com. Every order placed here automatically generates a 13% (of purchase price) donation to SMS, which means you can make a big impact at school just by remembering to use this link. Spread the word to parents, teachers, friends and family, anyone can shop through our custom URL for Shutterfly and Tiny Prints. Don’t miss this easy opportunity to support our school. Thank you for thinking of St. Mary School this Christmas season!

Support St. Mary School when you shop this holiday season... It’s easy! It’s automatic! Whether you’re just starting your holiday shopping or you’re almost done, the AMAZONSMILE FOUNDATION will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to our school. So far this school year, friends and family in the St. Mary's community have raised over $225 by using this link to shop on Amazon. Start here https://smile.amazon.com/ch/32-0445968 and the items you buy will also become a gift to SMS. The more, the merrier! Thanks for your support!

THANK YOU to Kathy Friscia and Loretta Dalgleish for coordinating our Christmas Craft Fair last Weekend. The event was a huge success and everyone had a great time! Thank you also to our many volunteers. The support from our vendors & crafters is always greatly appreciated, we could not do it without you!!

SMS 2017-18 ANNUAL FUND: Many companies match contributions that their employees make to non-profit institutions such as St. Mary School. Most matches are on a 1:1 basis, but some companies match 2:1 or 3:1. Upon making your own gift, you may request your company to match it. Matching gift forms are usually available in your company’s human resources office or please contact Robin Taylor at RTaylor@stmarybethelct.org

REGISTRATION for students entering Pre-school through Grade 8 is ongoing. Please call the school at 203-744-2922 or email our Director of Enrollment, Linda Garvey at lgarvey@stmarybethelct.org for information. You can also visit our website at www.stmarybethelct.org for school and registration information.
AROUND THE DIOCESE

DEFENDING OUR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY  In a letter to the U.S. Senate, the United States Conference for Catholic Bishops (USCCB) stated that it stands ready to work with Congress to address problems with the Affordable Care Act in order to protect the most vulnerable among us. They said, “The Catholic Church remains committed to ensuring the fundamental right to medical care, a right which is in keeping with the God‐given dignity of every person, and the corresponding obligation as a country to provide for this right. Health care debates must not be reduced to only those elements which appear most politically expedient; those without a strong voice in the process must not bear the brunt of attempts to cut costs.”

BROTHERHOOD IN ACTION CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE  Thank you for your generosity with our Thanksgiving food drive. We are now collecting non‐perishable donations for Christmas! For more info, call Leo Gallagher at 733‐7463. Please be as generous as you can as our food supplies are very low and demand is great! Monetary donations may be sent to: Brotherhood in Action, P.O. Box 582, Bethel, Ct. 06801.

Bishop Caggiano and the Diocesan Youth Choir for the annual ARISE AND SHINE CHRISTMAS CONCERT at the Regina Quick Center on the campus of Fairfield University at 7:00 p.m. on December 17, 2017. Tickets are general admission and are available online and at the box office for $20. Please visit the diocesan website - http://bridgeportdiocese.com - for more information.

OUR NEXT MEETING  Our next meeting is on Mon., Dec. 18 at 8:15pm in the Parish Hall. We will say the Rosary at 7:45pm in the Church.

If you are at least 18 years of age and think you may be interested in joining our ranks, contact Grand Knight Tony Iorfino at (203)744-2714 or email gkofpavia@gmail.com.
**MASS SCHEDULE**
Monday – Friday: 6:30 & 9:00am  
Saturday: 8:00am & 5:30pm (Vigil Mass)  
Sunday: 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, 11:30am & 5:30pm

**RECONCILIATION**  
Saturday: 4:00 – 5:00pm

**STAFF**  
Father Corey V. Piccinino, Pastor  
Father Robert Wolfe, Parochial Vicar  
Father Philip Phan, Parochial Vicar  
Deacon John DeRoin  
Kate Fitzgerald, Parish Secretary & Bulletin Editor  
Peggy Gavin, Parish Secretary  
Julie Doerner, Business Manager  
Paul Orsino, Property Manager

**ST. MARY SCHOOL (744-2922)**  
Greg Viceroy, Principal

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**  
Mary Ferri, Director (743-4557)

**RCIA (203)744-5777:** Call if you are interested in becoming a Catholic or completing your initiation as a Catholic with Confirmation and/or Eucharist.

**YOUTH MINISTRY (203)744-5777**

**MUSIC MINISTRY**  
Michael Ferrari, Music Director  
Elizabeth Barnes, Choir Director  
Karen Mattera, Children’s Choir

**FINANCE COMMITTEE (794-8512):** Bob Kozlowski, Chairman

**BAPTISMS:** Most Sundays at 12:45pm. Please call the Rectory at least six weeks in advance to schedule your Baptism and to sign up for the New Baptism Class that is required for both parents and Godparents. These classes are offered on the first Sunday of each month. Anyone requesting a Sponsorship form must be a currently registered and practicing Catholic, and they must attend one of the New Baptism Classes to receive it. There is a 3-month waiting period for a sponsorship form for the newly registered. The Catholic requirements for a Godparent/Sponsor are: you must be at least 16 years old; received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in the Catholic Church; attend Mass regularly on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation; receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion regularly; sincerely try to follow the moral teaching of the Catholic Church; and if married, were married in the Catholic Church.

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR MARRIAGE:** All couples must meet with a parish clergyman at least six (6) months before the marriage is to be celebrated.

**PASTORAL CARE AT DANBURY HOSPITAL:** Prior to Your Hospitalization: You or a family member should notify the Rectory.

**HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK:** To any of those who are homebound or hospitalized and interested in having a visit by a priest, please contact the parish office. Anyone interested in serving in this ministry, please call Father Philip at 744-5777.

**PRAYER LINE:** If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, please call our Prayer Line. Our team leaders are Maggie Kent (203-731-4738) and Deana Chamberlin (203-482-7149).

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**READINGS FOR THE WEEK**

**Mon., December 11**  
6:30 Special Intention  
9:00 + Steven Depelteau — Susi Costello

**Tues., December 12**  
6:30 Pope Francis’ December Intention for the Elderly  
9:00 + Peter & Cam DiCrescenzo — Family

**Wed., December 13**  
6:30 + Peter Clark (Birthday) — Family  
9:00 + Richard Saputo — Peg & Shay Gavin

**Thurs., December 14**  
6:30 + Victims of Gun Violence  
9:00 + Douglas Ruffles, Sr. — Mary English

**Fri., December 15**  
6:30 For Those Most in Need  
9:00 + Stephen Randall — Julie & Will Doerner

**Sat., December 16**  
8:00 + John Flanigan — Warren Curtis  
5:30 + Helen Legotte Fitzgerald — Isabel Pasqualone

**Sun., December 17**  
7:00 + Patricia N. Allen — The Allen Family  
8:30 + Thomas Hauser — Stephanie McNamara  
10:00 + Rose D’Ambrosio Maturo & Andrew D’Ambrosio — Children  
11:30 + John Maher — Gina & Dan Ippolito  
5:30 + Dawn Marie Rekasz Mejia — Julie & Will Doerner

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**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

**SAT., DECEMBER 9**  
5:30 + Dick Masselink — Family

**SUN., DECEMBER 10**  
7:00 + Father Paul M. Spodnick  
8:30 + Ann Hulswit — Cornie & Jed Costello  
10:00 + Doris & Charles Caffrey — Family  
11:30 + Mary Ellen Costello — Lynn & Roger Dexter  
5:30 + Warren Brown — Muriel Lombardi

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**READINGS FOR THE WEEK**

**Mon.:** Is 35:1-10; Ps 85:9ab, 10-14; Lk 5:17-26  
**Tues.:** Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Jdt 13:18bcde, 19; Lk 1:26-38  
**Wed.:** Is 40:25-31; Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10; Mt 11:28-30  
**Thur.:** Is 41:13-20; Ps 145:1, 9-13ab; Mt 11:11-15  
**Fri.:** Is 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Mt 11:16-19  
**Sat.:** Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80:2ac, 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Mt 17:9a, 10-13  
**Sun.:** Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; Lk 1:46-50, 53-54; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28