



St. Mary's Parish



Mass Schedule:

Monday through Friday
9:00 AM

Saturday Vigils
5:00 PM
7:30 PM

Sunday
7:30 AM
9:30 AM Family Mass
(C.L.O.W. Sept. – May)
11:30 AM Sung Mass

Holy Days: As announced

Adoration Schedule:

First Fridays from 9:30-
10:30 AM and as announced.

Our Mission:

"To know Christ and to make Him known."

8 Church St., Holliston, MA 01746
Website: www.stmarysholliston.com
Email Address: St.marys1870@gmail.com
Rectory Phone: (508) 429 - 4427
Religious Education Phone: (508) 429 - 6076

Dear Visitors: Welcome! We are delighted that you chose to worship with us this day. Please introduce yourself to the priest, and if you are interested in becoming a member of the parish then please register through our website or by calling the rectory. Please also be aware that for generations it has been the custom at St. Mary's to kneel together for a silent Hail Mary at the end of Mass. Please join in!

Confession: Saturdays from Noon to 12:45 PM, or by appointment.

Anointing of the Sick: Any time by appointment. Please call as soon as you are aware of a serious illness or upcoming surgery.

Baptism: The 2nd & 4th Sunday of each month. To register for Baptism Preparation call 429-4427.

Marriage: Please call at least 6 months in advance of your desired wedding date. Congratulations!



The practice of requesting a Mass to be offered for loved ones, living or deceased, is a beautiful and wonderful part of our Catholic Tradition. Continuing in this long-standing practice, you can remember someone who has died recently or many years ago. But intentions do not have to be just for the dead. They make beautiful gifts for any special occasion: birthday, anniversary, in thanksgiving for a prayer answered, etc. You can also offer an intention for someone who is struggling with a serious illness or other life trauma.

PARISH STAFF:

Rev. Mark J. Coiro, Pastor
 The Xaverian Fathers, Weekend Assistance
 Deacon John D. Barry, Permanent Deacon
 Deacon Ronald A. Dowding, Permanent Deacon
 Deacon Martin Breinlinger, Senior Deacon
 Mrs. Fran Crespi, D.R.E., Grades K-7
 Ms. Abigail Kelley-Lanser, Organist, Director of Music
 Mrs. Mary Beth Harris, Parish Secretary
 Mrs. Jennifer Burgett, Religious Education Secretary
 Ms. Mary Sanning, Business Manager
 Mrs. Najat Whalen, Sacristan
 Mr. Billy Hanson, Parish Facilities
 R & R Landscaping, Cemetery Care



2023 CHRISTMAS COLLECTION ~

The Christmas Mass Collection this weekend supports the retirement, healthcare, and financial needs of priests of the Archdiocese of Boston. We encourage you to please give generously on behalf of the priests that have devoted their

lives to faithfully serving God and the people of the Archdiocese of Boston. For more information, visit <https://clergytrust.org/>.



If you use Automatic Giving or WeShare, you may indicate your Christmas gift electronically, or use this QR code or the clergy trust website. Thank you!

MASS INTENTIONS:

Tuesday	December 26
9:00	Terry Stewart
Wednesday	December 27
9:00	John & Gloria Sullivan
Thursday	December 28
9:00	Funeral of Mary Hyland
Friday	December 29
9:00	Mark Fragassi
Saturday	December 30
5:00	Walter J. Ciampa, Sr., 8 th Anv.
7:30	John Hand
Sunday	December 31
7:30	Parishioners of St. Mary's
9:30	Michael and Mary Lou Ferriero
11:30	Bert Archambault

A TIME FOR FEASTING! After four weeks of Advent fasting, penance and almsgiving, we now celebrate the great Feast of the Nativity and begin a season of feasting in the Church. Let us savor each celebration and drink deeply of the grace God offers!



FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY:

December 30 and 31, regular Sunday Mass Schedule. We honor the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We look to their example and pray that our own families may be holy – enjoying unity and peace.



FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY: January 6

and 7, regular Weekend Mass Schedule. The Wise Men arrive in Bethlehem bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. We thank God for all the many gifts He has given us and offer Him the gift of our worship and lives spent in loving service of His Son.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Parish Family,

As I write this Christmas bulletin note, it is pouring rain outside and the Israeli military just attacked Holy Family Catholic Parish in Gaza – the latest in weeks of atrocities committed against Palestinians and Israelis both.

Very appropriately, on the radio I just heard the song, "I Believe in Father Christmas." The first verse goes,

*"They said there'll be snow at Christmas
They said there'll be peace on earth
But instead it just kept on raining
A veil of tears for the virgin birth."*

Certainly, in this tragic time in the lands made holy by Christ, it is harder than usual to muster Christmas joy. The "Little Town of Bethlehem," where our Sister Parish is located, is locked down and experiencing nightly arrest raids by the IDF. Those residents with jobs outside the West Bank barrier wall cannot get to them. The majority of businesses inside the Bethlehem area depend on pilgrimage and tourism, and so have been forced to shut down.

And yet, into the very midst of all this hardship, the celebration of Jesus' Birth still comes. A little Child comes to give us hope for a future of justice and peace we cannot yet see. A tiny Baby is born, reminding us that even the smallest light can stand against the darkness and herald the dawn of grace.

In response to a request from our Sister Parish, Our Lady's in Beit Sahour, the St. Mary's Parish and Finance Councils both voted unanimously to scholarship four Palestinian Catholic children this school year, instead of our usual two. The current war has made it impossible for many to meet tuition, and our support this year will truly be a light and a lifeline for these children. They are: Pellar, a 7th Grade girl; Farah, a 6th Grade boy; Bissan, a 7th Grade girl; and Andrea, an 8th Grade boy.

We just received thank you Christmas Cards from all four children, which are provided to the right. Let us pray for these children. Let us pray for peace. Let us continue to find small ways to be a light in the darkness of this world – knowing that God can accomplish more than we can possibly imagine when we make even a little room for Him.

God bless you.
And Merry Christmas
everyone.



Thank you so much for
your help & Merry Christmas
and happy new year
I hope next year
better and full of
Peace.

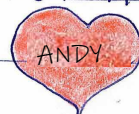
from:
Bissan.



Merry
Christmas



Merry Christmas, Happy New
year and a new year full of love
happiness and peace thanks
andrea



Happ New year
on the occasion of
Christmas, we bid
farewell to a year
and welcome a new
year to begin with
great celebrations of
the birth of Jesus
Christ. Happy New
year

Farah ALI Baho



I'd like to express my
gratitude for helping me
with my tuition fees
at school.

I wish you all a Merry
Christmas and a happy
new year full of joy,
happiness and prosperity.

Pellar Varayesh



THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT AT ST. MARY'S!



TGIF teens sort the 5,027 items St. Mary's collected for the Cardinal's Emergency Winter Clothing Drive for Immigrants and Refugees.



St. Mary's Middle School Youth Group Cookie Walk.

A record \$2,824 is raised for the suffering poor in Haiti!



St. Mary's Middle School Youth Group carols at Mission Springs and Timothy Daniel's Nursing Home.



"Christmas is the spirit of giving without a thought of getting. It is happiness because we see joy in people. It is forgetting self and finding time for others. It is discarding the meaningless and stressing the true values."

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT AT ST. MARY'S!



**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SPONSORING RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE:**

On Saturday, January 20, in St. Mary's Father Haley Hall, the Council will sponsor its annual Red Cross Blood Drive. Hours are from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM. To schedule an appointment, contact 1-800-REDCROSS or visit redcrossblood.org and search by zip code (01746) in the "Find a Blood Drive" field. For further information, contact the Knights of Columbus Council Blood Drive coordinator, Rodman Burgett at 508-653-6130. Every day, blood donors help patients of all ages - accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and those battling cancer. In fact, every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood.

HOLLISTON PANTRY SHELF HELP: Regular coffee, peanut butter, jelly, sugar, ketchup, mayonnaise, Chunky Soup, cookies, canned turkey/chicken, canned fruits, pasta sauce, canned tomatoes, toilet paper and cake and brownie mixes. Donations may be dropped off in the blue bin by the main parking lot entrance.

THE ROSE FOR LIFE: Is sponsored this week by the Chiango Family. Please join them in prayer for an unborn child.

WINGS WINTER SEASON (Women in God's Spirit): WINGS is a ministry of encouragement and enrichment for women of all ages who seek to deepen their faith and grow in relationship with God and one another. We have successfully concluded our Fall 2023 In Person and Virtual Season "Prayer – A Conversation with God." To view these recorded presentations, visit our WINGS webpage <https://stmarysholliston.com/women-in-gods-spirit-w-i-n-g-s/>. Watch for details on our Winter Season starting in mid-January. For additional information about the WINGS ministry, please call Jen Schiller at 617-852-9632 or Diane Collins at 508-259-7795. Register at: stmaryswingssecretary@gmail.com.

MASS FOR UNBAPTIZED CHILDREN: To provide a sense of closure and to offer our prayers for unbaptized children, St. Mary's will celebrate a special Mass on Monday evening, January 8, at 7:00 PM. The Mass will be offered for the souls of every child lost before receiving the Sacrament of Baptism. By commending these children to Jesus, Whose tenderness toward them caused Him to say: "Let the children come to Me, do not hinder them," (CCC1261) we will be surrendering our grief, and the hope that God, Who desires that all people should be saved, will see to it that His precious children, and ours, may soon share His joy in heaven. If you have lost a child prior to baptism, know someone who has, or just want to show your solidarity for grieving families, come to our special Mass on January 8. Add your voice to theirs in Communion with our Lord.

POPE BENEDICT'S THIRD ENCYCLICAL: On Saturday mornings, January 13, 20, and 27, 2024, from 10:00 - 11:00 AM, Leo Racine will lead an in-person reading/discussion group on Pope Benedict's 2009 encyclical Caritas in Veritate, on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth. The US Bishops, on their website (www.usccb.org), describe Caritas in Veritate, Pope Benedict's third encyclical, as "a call to see the relationship between human and environmental ecologies and to link charity and truth in the pursuit of justice, the common good, and authentic human development." The meetings will be held in Rooms 3 and 4 of the Parish Center, with the possibility of a Zoom meeting if there is inclement weather on any particular Saturday. Please contact Leo at 508-429-7476 or leoaracine@msn.com for more information or to register.



ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024, our Music Director Abbey Kelley-Lanser will be relaunching the Children's Choir and the Youth Choir! Rehearsals will be held weekly on Wednesdays in the St. Mary's Lower Hall. Our goals are to foster musical community among the groups, to prepare solo or joint choir songs for every other 9:30 AM Sunday Mass and special events, to learn about God through lifelong, memorable songs and to make a joyful noise unto the Lord! To Sign Up or if you have any questions, contact Abbey at musicatstmarysholliston@gmail.com, or call her at 508-429-6076.



Children's Choir: 3rd - 5th Graders, Wednesdays 3:30 - 4:15 PM.

Youth Choir: 6th Graders and above, Wednesdays 4:00 - 5:15 PM.

First Sung Mass: Sunday, January 28 at 8:45 AM warmup for the 9:30 AM Mass.



MSYG ADULT PLANNING MEETING: Thursday, January 4 at 7 PM, in Fr. Haley Hall. Any Catholic who attends Mass weekly at St. Mary's and is otherwise living a Catholic life, is invited to assist with this ministry for our Middle School age parishioners. You do not need to have a child in the Youth Group. Please bring your family calendar to the meeting. CORI and Virtus training apply.

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP ~ UPCOMING EVENTS:

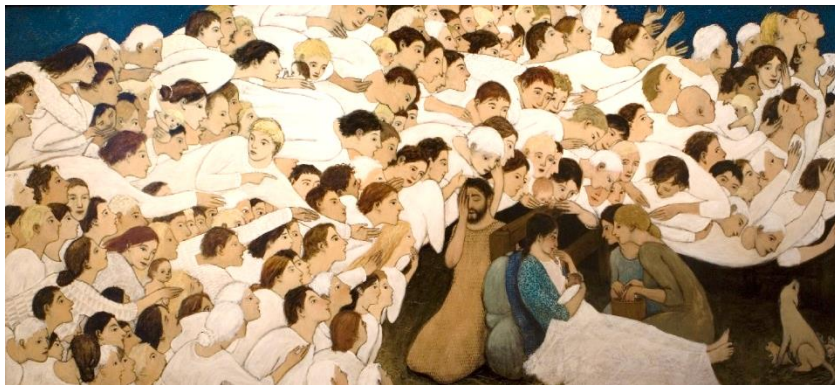
Thursday, January 4, 7 PM, Fr. Haley Hall, Sem.
2 Adult Volunteer MSYG Planning Meeting.
Friday, January 5, Celtics vs Utah Jazz.
Friday, January 26, Snow Tubing, Nashoba.



TGIF (Teens Gather In Faith): Our next High School Youth Group event is Saturday, January 20, to Level 99. Our next TGIF Meeting is Sunday, January 28, from 7 - 8:30 PM. All Summer 2024 Mississippi Mission Trip Forms and the \$200 Mission Trip deposits are due at this Meeting.

ST. MARY'S MOM'S PRAYER GROUP: Is on hiatus until January 9, 2024. Please join us on Tuesdays in January from 10:30 AM - 12 noon in Fr. Haley Hall. Every week, we will pray together, read reflections according to the liturgical season, and share prayer intentions. Children of all ages are welcome, there will be a few toys and coloring activities available. Coffee and snacks will be provided. Contact 508-429-4427 with any questions.

CHRISTMAS WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS: *"Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness. No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all."* - St. Leo the Great



TODAY'S CHRISTMAS BULLETIN COVER: Nativity, ©Brian T. Kershnik, 2006. Used with permission.

A river of angels flood down to witness the miracle of the Virgin Birth. Upon beholding this wondrous sight, they are filled with joy, raising their arms and voices to glorify God. As we experience Jesus anew this Christmas, may we too be touched by joy and wonder. May we praise God gratefully in holy worship and lives worthy of His Son.

Joseph looks overwhelmed. In these times, our own personal trials and those of a world so darkened by hatred and violence can make us feel the same. But we remain true. We do not abandon Jesus, knowing that God has a plan, and that He is ever faithful. Likewise, Mary holds tight to the Christ Child entrusted to her. She would embrace Him not only in this moment, but all her earthly life and beyond – ever faithful, ever virgin, ever sinless, ever true.

In Christianity, dogs symbolize faithfulness. The dog alone seems able to see the angels streaming above the manger. Just so, we strive to walk by faith, not by sight – guided by the God Who is invisible, but always present and loving.

What about the two midwives? Here is what the artist himself said. *"I know that no midwives are mentioned in the scriptures, but bear in mind that almost none of the details of his birth are mentioned in these holy texts. Even the stable is inferred by the brief mention of an improvised cradle – his being 'laid in a manger'. The chance of a young woman having her first child away from her usual residence and not being attended by women (even strangers) seems to me very unlikely. Women would come. They would hear; they would help. I feel sure of it."*

Let us all likewise be aware of those in need and be there for them in Christ!

CLOW - CHILDREN K-6: CHILDREN'S

LITURGY OF THE WORD: On January 7 CLOW will resume with children remaining in the main church to participate in the Liturgy of the Word with Fr. Mark. Donuts, Juice and Coffee will be available in Fr. Haley Hall following the 9:30 AM Mass.

CHRISTMAS BREAK ~ SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 TO FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 2024. CLASSES WILL RESUME ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES THIS WEEK

DAY	GRADE	GRADE
Sun., Jan. 7	GR-2 at 8:10 AM	GR-2 at 10:45 AM
	GR-3 at 7:55 AM	GR-3 at 10:45 AM
Mon., Jan. 8	GR-8 at 6:00 PM	
Tues., Jan. 9	GR-5 at 4:00 PM	GR-6 at 4:00 PM
	GR-6 at 5:00 PM	GR-10 at 7:00 PM
Wed., Jan. 10	GR-2 at 4:15 PM	GR-8 at 6:00 PM
Thur., Jan. 11	GR-4 at 4:00 PM	GR-5 at 4:00 PM
	GR-10 at 7:00 PM	
Sun., Jan. 14	NO CLASSES	Martin Luther King

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEER PARENTS, TEACHERS AND TEENS WHO MADE THE CHRISTMAS HAPPENING SO SPECIAL. The Grade 4 and 5 children brought toys and made homemade Christmas Cards, Crafts and stuffed the giving bags full of many needed items for the children in need. We also are grateful for the parents and teachers who brought in food for the children. Our Music Director, Abbey, engaged the children to sing beautiful Christmas Carols, bringing great joy. Most of all we are thankful to Erica Kuharich, our Grade 4 Coordinator and Virginia Calapa, who coordinated all the crafts and giving bags that were delivered to the Food Pantry for distribution to families with children.

GRADE 2 TEACHER / COORDINATOR

MEETING: Grade 2 teachers are to attend one of the meetings on Thursday, January 4 at 10:00 AM or 7:30 PM in Room 3 – 4. This meeting covers the second semester and First Holy Communion.

GRADE 2 FIRST COMMUNION MASSES 2024:

Letters to families to select First Communion Masses for their children will be sent out on Friday, January 5 with an index card that must be returned by Friday, March 1, 2024. Early responses will have their choices honored.

CONFIRMATION I AND II: Grade 10 classes meet on Tuesday, January 9 and Thursday, January 11 from 7:00 - 8:30 PM. Please check into Fr. Haley Hall.

PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN TRAINING WORKSHOP: All new volunteers in any capacity and ministry must take the Protecting God's Children (PGC) Training. Please check our bulletin each week for the newly scheduled **PGC Workshops**.

Participants must **pre-register** for a session. Here's how: "Go to www.Virtusonline.org. Click on "First-time Registrant" and select "Boston, MA (Archdiocese)" as your organization. You will have to create a VIRTUS log-in before proceeding to register. Follow the prompts after this."

CORI RENEWAL ALERT: All active and new volunteers (18+ years) must have a completed **2024 CORI** form on file in our office to serve in a ministry. Volunteer renewals may submit a copy of driver's license, along with signed/completed CORI form and email directly to st.marysre1870@gmail.com for processing. New volunteers must have information verified in person by any staff member. *Please note: If a FY2023 form has already been submitted, we do not need another.*

GRADES 5 AND 7 COORDINATORS ARE STILL NEEDED: Please contact Fran Crespi if you are interested and able to help. Training is provided. Please call 508-429-6076 or st.marysre1870@gmail.com.

Please note that R.E. Coordinators are responsible for guiding and assisting both teachers and students in growing in their relationship with Christ and His Church. Since this is done best by example, all parish coordinators are required to be regularly practicing members of the St. Mary's Worshipping Community.

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS TO ALL!

The RE Staff wishes to thank our Grade Coordinators, Teachers, Monitors and Volunteers who have generously given their time, talents and gifts to nurture the Catholic faith of our children and youth. May the Christ Child bless you abundantly for your ministry and service to St. Mary's Parish this Christmas.

