



St. Francis Xavier Parish

April 9, 2017

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

26 CHESTNUT LAND ROAD
NEW MILFORD, CT 06776
860-354-2202

Web Site: www.sfxnewmilford.org
Email: sfxparish@sfxnewmilford.org
Office Hours: 9 A.M. - 5 P.M.
Mon. - Thurs. (Closed on Friday)

PASTORAL TEAM

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FAITH FORMATION 860-354-5372

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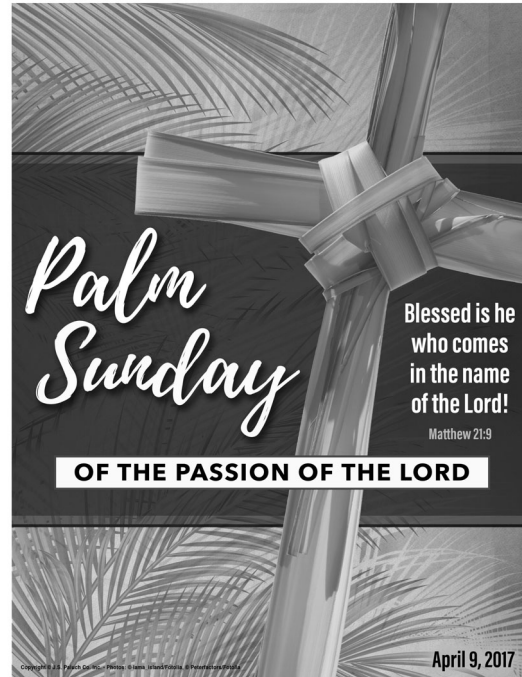
HOLY INFANT NURSERY SCHOOL

Marge Cooper, Director
HolyInfant@sfxnewmilford.org
860-354-7284

Mailing Address & Office Location

1 Elm Street
New Milford, CT 06776

Fax # 860-355-9485



MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday at 7:30, 10:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. (Life Teen)

Wednesday, Friday at 8:00 a.m.
Tuesday, Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

SACRAMENTS CONFESSIONS

Mondays during Lent 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Saturdays 4:00 - 4:45 p.m.

BAPTISMS

Call Parish Office - 860-354-2202.

MARRIAGES

Contact the priest 1 year in advance.

MINISTRY TO THE SICK

The parish clergy and Ministers of Holy Communion visit New Milford Hospital, Candlewood Valley Health & Rehab, Village Crest Center for Health & Rehab and some homebound regularly. For other specific visits, please contact the Parish Office.

WELCOME

We are glad you are here.
If you would like to join the parish, please call the parish office.



SATURDAY VIGIL - April 8

5:00 P.M. +Robert Gray
Req. by Dave and Nancy Lynch

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

SUNDAY - April 9

7:30 A.M. +Michael & Roseanne Macri
Req. by Theresa Shepard
10:00 A.M. +Edward & Grace Martini
Req. by Tom & Cathy Valedes
5:00 P.M. +Francis Afra
Req. by The Lee Family

MONDAY - No scheduled Mass - April 10

TUESDAY - April 11

6:30 P.M. Intentions of Jessie Markstaller
Req. by The Markstaller & Jonke Family

WEDNESDAY - April 12

8:00 A.M. For the living and deceased members of
The Shugrue and Brennan Families
Req. by The Shugrue Family

HOLY THURSDAY - April 13

7:00 P.M. Liturgy of Our Lord's Supper

GOOD FRIDAY - April 14

3:00 P.M. Stations of the Cross
7:00 P.M. Liturgy of Our Lord's Passion

EASTER SATURDAY VIGIL - April 15

8:00 P.M. For our RCIA Candidates and Their
Families

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of Our Lord

SUNDAY - April 16

7:30 A.M. +Linda Biondino & Carol Jean
Req. by Their Family
10:00 A.M. For The People of St. Francis Xavier &
The Immaculate Conception Province
(Please note: No 5:00 p.m. Mass on Easter Sunday)

ITEMS FOR THE MISSIONS: If you have any of the following items: rosaries, prayer cards, medals, small religious books, Bibles, etc, to send to the missions, please contact Judy at 860-354-7254.

The **Women's Guild** will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, April 11 at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Hall. New members are always welcome.



Monday, April 10

Confessions 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Holy Thursday, April 13

7:00 p.m. Liturgy of Our Lord's Supper

Good Friday, April 14

12 noon - Faith Walk on the Green
3:00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross
7:00 p.m. - Liturgy of Our Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday, April 15

8:00 p.m. - Easter Vigil Mass
(No Confessions on Holy Saturday)

Easter Sunday, April 16

Masses 7:30 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
(There is NO 5:00 p.m. Mass on Easter Sunday.)

CONFRATERNITY OF THE ROSARY

Reminder: The Annual Confraternity of the Rosary Ladies Retreat will be on June 7th at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Litchfield. More details to come.

Our **Prayer Shawl Ministry** will meet on Tuesday, April 18 at 1:00 p.m. in the **Parish Center**. New members are always welcome to join this ministry to knit/crochet shawls and lap-blankets for the home bound or infirm.

You Can Change the Life of a Teen...

Dear Parishioners: The Steubenville Retreat is an amazing opportunity for a teen to grow in faith and encounter God in a large community of teens celebrating their Catholic Faith. There are professional speakers and several opportunities to receive God's love in the Sacraments and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Please pray about financially supporting our group that is traveling to St. John's University in NYC to attend this Retreat in July. We are sending approximately 30 teens this year and we are looking for support to offset the cost of the bus and retreat. The total cost for one teen is \$325 this year. God Bless you for all the many ways you have supported our endeavors already. We have several fund raising activities planned in the coming months, but we'll need additional funds to meet our goal.

A donation in any amount to the Steubenville Retreat Fund is greatly appreciated. Please make checks payable to St. Francis and write "Steubenville" on the memo line. You can put your donations in the collection basket or mail them to the Parish Office, 1 Elm Street, New Milford, CT 06776. *Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!*

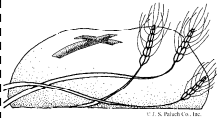
We are pleased to announce the ST. FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOLARSHIP 2017

All high school seniors attending college, community college, trade school, etc. in the Fall of 2017, who are active members of St. Francis Xavier Parish are invited to apply for the St. Francis Xavier Scholarship. Application forms are available in the Parish Office at 1 Elm Street, and must be completed and returned by **Thursday, May 18, 2017**. Also required: 3 letters of recommendation from adults who are non-relatives, one from church, one from school and one from an employer, your high school transcript and response to an essay question. Call the office for info 860-354-2202.

Announcing the Knights Annual State Raffle

Proceeds are used to fund state scholarships, youth activities, Pro-Life activities and much more. The local proceeds will be donated to the parish youth group. Tickets are \$10 each with 10 prizes totaling \$15,000. Drawing will be held on May 5th. For tickets contact the following knights Francis Gorglione, Frank Greco, Gene Calarco or the Parish Office.


Wheelchairs - We have acquired two new wheelchairs for church use. If you or someone you know needs a wheelchair in the church, please notify one of the ushers.



Delicious Challah Bread on sale! Easter Weekend, April 15 & 16
Life Teen is once again sponsoring the sale of "Resurrection Bread" this Easter Weekend after the Masses to benefit our Steubenville Retreat fund. This bread makes wonderful French toast, and makes a lovely gift if you are visiting family or friends to celebrate Easter. (\$7.00 per loaf.)

2017 Archbishop's Annual Appeal

Thank you to the parish families who have made a gift or pledge commitment to the 2017 Archbishop's Annual Appeal. If you have not yet had the opportunity, please consider prayerfully supporting the many Good Works of the Archdiocese. Every gift will be gratefully received and sincerely appreciated.



Sacrificial Giving
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Collection Totals will be in next week's bulletin due to early bulletin deadline.

Employment opportunity at St. Francis Xavier

We are looking to fill a part-time maintenance position for our Parish Center at 1 Elm Street. Basic maintenance of building, including grounds. Person should have some knowledge of building maintenance, repairs, etc. Position is part-time, 25 hours a week (flexible), starts after Easter. Please contact Fr. Joe (frjoe@sfxnewmilford.org) or speak to him after Mass if interested.


St. Francis Xavier Parish Annual Dinner Dance

Please join us at Fox Hill Inn on Friday, May 5th from 7:00 - 11:00 pm for an enjoyable spring evening of great food, great fellowship, and fun! Tickets will be on sale following the Masses and are \$40 per person. Our evening will include: an hour d'oeuvres hour, a pre-dinner champagne toast followed by a fresh spring salad, and your choice of Filet Mignon, Mahi -Mahi or Chicken Normandy. Dessert and coffee will also be served. One cocktail ticket, soft drinks, and juice are also included with this incredible ticket price (cash bar available). Come dance the night away on the beautiful Fox Hill dance floor and join us to welcome in spring! (*Tickets will also be available in the Parish Office.*)

OPERATION RICE BOWL

Have you taken home your family Rice Bowl? They are located on the window sills near the exits of the Church. To learn more about what these rice bowls mean to those communities throughout the world, please visit crsricebowl.org. You can watch videos of the people and communities your Lenten gifts are changing through CRS Rice Bowls.

Sponsored by our Knights of Columbus
Every Monday night
VFW Hall (Avery Road, New Milford)
Doors open at 5:45 p.m.; BINGO at 6:30 p.m.



Retrouvaille April 21st Weekend Announced

Marriage help - If your marriage has become troubled and stressed, unloving or uncaring; even if you are divorced or separated but want to try again, the Retrouvaille program can help. Retrouvaille provides tools to communicate better, resolve conflicts fairly, and re-discover why you fell in love. The next Retrouvaille weekend is April 21-23. Call 800-470-2230, email cherylandsteve@cox.net, or go to their website www.helpourmarriage.com.



LIFE TEEN MASS
Every Sunday
5:00 P.M.

The **LIFETEEN LIFENIGHT** movie “The Passion of the Christ” will be shown **THIS Sun.**, April 9th Palm Sunday, following the 5pm Mass. ALL High School teens are welcome to join us. A soup & bread dinner will be served. Parent pickup will be at 9:00pm. RSVP to Sue P at SPullen@sfxnewmilford.org or 860-354-5372.

LAST CALL: This Lenten season we will be selling Luminaries for lighting at the Easter Vigil in memory or honor of a loved one(s). The bags are purple with a cross cutout. The price for a Luminary is \$10. Half the proceeds will go to our Youth Ministry program here at St. Francis Xavier and the other half will go to SavetheStork.com. You may purchase after all the Masses or at the Parish office. Please call Sue P. with questions. Thanks and God bless!

As per your schedule there will be a SPECIAL MASS FOR ALL YEAR 1 & 2 CONFIRMATION STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES held on Sun., April 23rd at the 5:00pm Mass.

CONFIRMATION YEAR TWO: Your mandatory retreat takes place on Sat., Apr. 29th at 1:00 pm at the Parish Center (school building) and ends on Sun., Apr. 30th at 6:00 pm at the Church (following the Mass). A letter was sent home with more details, please call Sue P. if you did NOT receive yours.

CONFIRMATION YEAR TWO: the date for the Confirmation ceremony is: Sat., June 3rd. If your son/daughter is in the Wednesday afternoon or evening classes your Confirmation will be in the morning ceremony (10:00am). Rehearsal for the morning ceremony is Tues., May 30th at 7:15pm. If your son/daughter is in the Sunday classes your Confirmation will be held in the afternoon ceremony (1:00pm). Rehearsal for the afternoon ceremony is Wed., May 31st at 6:30pm. Please bring your sponsor to the rehearsal if possible, if not a parent or guardian MUST stand in. Both rehearsals and ceremonies will take place at the Church. Call Sue P. with questions.

JR. YOUTH GROUP: 6TH, 7TH & 8TH graders: We have a service project planned for Fri., Apr. 21st from 6:30-8:30pm at the Parish Center...more details to follow. RSVP by calling or emailing Sue P.

Faith Formation 860-354-5372

CLASSES FOR THIS WEEK:

NO Classes due to Spring Recess! 4/10-16/2017

Holy Week schedule:

Thurs., 4/13 Holy Thursday Liturgy 7:00pm

Fri., 4/14 Good Friday 3:00pm Stations of the Cross

7:00pm Liturgy of Lord's Passion

Sat., 4/15 Easter Vigil Mass 8:00pm

Sun., 4/16 Easter Masses 7:30am & 10:00am

CLASSES FOR NEXT WEEK:

The Faith Formation Office will be closed on Monday, April 17th.

*Tues., April 18th NES grades 1&2 3:30-5:00pm

*Tues., April 18th grades 6,7&8 6:30-8:00pm

*Wed., April 19th SNIS grades 3-5 3:30-5:00pm

*Wed., April 19th Confirmation year 1 3:00-4:30pm

*Wed., April 19th Confirmation year 1&2 6:30-8:00pm

*Thurs., April 20th SNIS grades 3-5 3:30-5:00pm

***LAST CLASS**

FIRST COMMUNION CROSS CEREMONY if you were unable to attend any Masses last weekend please see Mary in the office.

REGISTRATION 2017-2018: & Summer Spirit will be held on Wed., April 26th at the Church from 10:00am-12:00noon and 5:00-7:00pm. A letter with all the details was mailed last week. Catechists and Assistants (CURRENT AND FUTURE) only may register early. We highly recommend you register early especially if you need a particular day and/or the bus.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY: Join us on Sat., May 6th at the 5:00pm Mass. After the opening prayer all the children in grades kindergarten – grade 5 will be invited to hear the Liturgy of the Word with teen and adult leaders in the Church Hall. The children will return to their families for the Liturgy of the Eucharist after the petitions. This is a wonderful opportunity for the children to hear the Gospel and its meaning in words they understand. Any questions please call Mary Vannucci at the Faith Formation office.

SERVICE PROJECT OPPORTUNITY: STAMP OUT HUNGER: will take place on Sat., May 13th at the New Milford Social Service department in the Richmond Center building. They need help sorting food for the food bank from 2:00-6:00pm. This is taking place after the US Postal Service mailbox food collection drive. Any questions call Sue P.

The View From



My Window

Each Holy Week, I think about a trip I was privileged to make some years ago- a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. This pilgrimage was sponsored the Franciscans to give us the opportunity to visit the holy places so important to the life of Christ, not as tourists, but rather, as people of faith, living and learning about our relationship with God.

This particular pilgrimage brought us to many holy places throughout that area, including Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cana, Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and, of course, Jerusalem.

The friars of my order, the Order of Friars Minor, through the Custody of the Holy Land, ever since St. Francis himself visited the Holy Land in 1217, have been entrusted with these Holy Places. So we were able to see places and visit sites that the ordinary pilgrim or tourist does not get to see. Needless to say, it was a privileged time in my life.

I remember in particular my visit to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher. This beautiful church marks the place of Calvary and the tomb of Jesus- so it is a particularly important holy place. Walking into the Basilica for the first time, however, I did not get the impression that I was on holy ground, but rather, that I was in Walt Disney World at the height of the tourist season. People were laughing, talking, taking pictures in front of the altar of Calvary, at the tomb of Jesus, posing, and saying irreverent things. As I was sitting by the entrance of the Basilica, there was a man sitting next to me. We started talking and it was obvious he knew a lot about the Basilica. He handed me his business card and introduced himself to me. His name was Wajeeh Y. Nuseibeh and he was (and continues to be) the "Custodian and Door-Keeper of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher." This is an exalted position at the Basilica. As a matter of fact, he is often seen on television, particularly around Good Friday, when scenes of their Good Friday procession are broadcast. This position has been in his family for almost 1,400 years and through all the centuries, someone from his family has opened and closed the massive wooden doors of this shrine every day.

The interesting thing is that Mr. Nuseibeh is a Muslim, as were his ancestors from the very beginning. This may seem odd- to have a Muslim in charge of the Basilica. Yet his role is vital to keeping peace at the Basilica. He has Turkish-era documents declaring that his family is in control of the doors. Some of these documents are painted in gold on deer skins, with the seal of the Sultan on them.

It was obvious to me that Mr. Nuseibeh was a man of deep faith. Although not a Christian, he had a deep love and respect for the Basilica and took his position very seriously.

So, I sat there talking with Mr. Nuseibeh for over an hour, and would have stayed all day. He has been at the Basilica almost every day, first as a child with his father, and now in his own capacity as Custodian and Door-Keeper. In the course of our conversation, I asked him about his experiences at the Basilica, and he said he was concerned about the amount of disrespect he saw. He said people used to come as pilgrims, with reverence, in a prayerful manner. He said the Russians, after they were freed from communism, would come on their knees into the church. Today, he said, people come as tourists, without any devotion or respect.

I think that it is one thing to attack religion. This goes on a lot in our society. But today we see religion made insignificant. And here lies the danger. When the important articles of our faith are ignored, we make the message of the Gospel irrelevant. When our rituals are celebrated to empty pews, we make the message of the Gospel irrelevant. When our sacraments no longer have meaning for us, we make the message of the Gospel irrelevant. When Sundays become a day of recreation for us instead of the Lord's Day, we make the message of the Gospel irrelevant. And when our High Holy Days become just other days of the week, with business as usual, we make the message of the Gospel irrelevant.

Is it a matter of the degree of our faith? I don't know. Is it a matter of lack of desire, or sheer laziness? I don't know. In Jerusalem, to contrast the irreverence of the Holy Sepulcher, I visited two Islamic Mosques, the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. At each of these, we were required to remove our shoes before entering. These mosques were filled with a sense of awe and reverence. The silence was deafening. What a contrast to the show being put on at so many of our own churches and holy places.

We cannot expect to be credible witnesses to the words of Jesus Christ if we who call ourselves Christians do not show an enthusiasm for these events. In an age when the wedding banquet becomes more important than the church ceremony, when the christening party is seen as the highlight of our children's baptism day, when we hire limousines to carry our children to their First Communion, our priorities are way off. We may consider it kind of an embarrassment that different Christian groups squabble over the Holy Sepulcher. But we do a similar thing when we ignore the beautiful liturgies the church gives us to celebrate the events that led to our salvation.

I hope that every disciple of the Lord will participate as much as possible in the High Holy Days of our faith this week- Holy Thursday Liturgy of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday's Liturgy of the Passion, and Easter. It may take making some sacrifices (which we should already be used to because of Lent), changing our schedules, or even taking some time off from work. Let's make a statement to all the world of our faith in the importance of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we wave our palms this weekend in the celebration of Palm Sunday, as we cry "Hosanna to the Son of David," let's also walk with Jesus on the road to Calvary, crucifixion, and new life at Easter.

Happy Palm Sunday,

Fr. Joe