



## OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

23-25 NEWTOWN AVENUE, ASTORIA, NY 11102 | 718.278.1834 | MOUNTCARMELASTORIA.ORG

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023

## 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT



A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. - Jn 1:6-7

# OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

## PARISH MANAGER

Celeste Stewart, Ext. 111  
[cstewart@diobrook.org](mailto:cstewart@diobrook.org)  
[church@mountcarmelastoria.org](mailto:church@mountcarmelastoria.org)

## RELIGIOUS ED COORDINATOR

Nelly Gutierrez, Ext. 114  
[reled@mountcarmelastoria.org](mailto:reled@mountcarmelastoria.org)  
[ccdmountcarmel@gmail.com](mailto:ccdmountcarmel@gmail.com)

## OFFICE RECEPTIONIST

Luis Sanchez Ext. 110  
[Lsanchez@diobrook.org](mailto:Lsanchez@diobrook.org)



## PASTOR

Rev. Msgr. Cuong M. Pham

## PAROCHIAL VICARS

Rev. Michael McHugh  
Rev. Sy Hung Tran

## PERMANENT DEACONS

Deacon Ruben Mendez  
Deacon Jacob Rodriguez

## RETIRED PRIESTS IN RESIDENCE

Rev. Ed Brady, Pastor Emeritus  
Rev. Joseph Tan Pham  
Rev. Msgr. John Harrington, K.H.S.

## MUSIC DIRECTOR

Lucille Mascia  
[music@mountcarmelastoria.org](mailto:music@mountcarmelastoria.org)

## Youth Minister

Dayonel Mejia  
[YouthMinister@mountcarmelastoria.org](mailto:YouthMinister@mountcarmelastoria.org)

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

5:00pm Mercedes Beck, Janet,  
Nerisa Rufino (*Living—Birthday*)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 (*Third Sunday of Advent*)

8:00am U Angelo  
9:00am Maria Tola  
9:30am Memorial for Unborn Nacinovich Child  
11:00am Jesus Mejia  
12:30pm Maria Sonia Lasso (*1 Aniversario*),  
Feliciano Verdejo, Ofelia Castro Diaz,  
Patrick Socci (Por Sanacion),  
Cecilia Ann Socci (*19th Aniversario*)  
3:00pm For the People of the Parish

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

8:00am Vincenzo & Giuseppa Barretta and Family  
12:00pm Maria & Nicola Mancini

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

8:00am Esther Solorenzo (*Living*)  
12:00pm Arthur & Jaqueline Bertolotti

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

8:00am In Thanksgiving for Msgr. Cuong Pham  
on his Special Birthday  
12:00pm Aldo & Rose Bertolotti

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21 (*Saint Peter Canisius*)

8:00am St. Rita Cascia— In Thanksgiving  
12:00pm Joseph & Marie Bertolotti

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

8:00am Sabbia & Raffaele Carullo and Family  
12:00pm Irene, Joseph & Patricia Dura

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23 (*Saint John of Kanty*)

8:00am Leonardo & Giuseppina Grippi  
5:00pm Leno, Delphine & Anna Bertolotti,  
Salvatore Tagliaferro, Aurelia Jimenez,  
Jose & Etilma Conde,  
Michael Rozario (*Birthday Memorial*),  
Msgr. Cuong M. Pham (*Living—50th Birthday*)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 (*4th Sunday of Advent*)

8:00am Anna Kim (*Death Anniversary*)  
9:00am Augusto Family  
10:00am Belen Cevallos & Christopher Kambitsis  
11:30am Saul Salomon Mendoza & Eva Palafox,  
Manuel Sanchez, Camila Sanchez,  
Mariano Sanchez, Margarita Garcia  
5:00pm Ernesto & Luisa Bertolotti  
7:00pm Francisco J. Marcial (*2 Aniversario*),  
Maria del Rocio Garcia, Pedro Garcia Salas,  
Ofelia Castro Diaz  
10:00pm Natale Forzano  
11:30pm Vietnamese Christmas Mass

## MEMORIAL OF THE WEEK



*The Altar Candles are being offered for  
Rose & George Hasselberg Sr.,  
William & George Hasselberg Jr.,  
and Gloria Radoslovich, by the Hasselberg Family*

## SECOND COLLECTIONS

**December 17:** There will be a second collection after communion as your Christmas Gift to the parish. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

## MASS SCHEDULE

<b>Saturday</b>	5:00 PM (Vigil Mass)
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Main Church:</b> 8:00 AM (English) 9:30 AM (Bi-lingual) 11:00 AM (English) 12:30 PM (Spanish) 3:00 PM (Vietnamese) <b>Chapel:</b> 9:00 AM (Italian) 10:30 AM (Czech-Slovak)
<b>Weekdays</b>	8:00 AM and 12:00 Noon
<b>Saturday</b>	8:00 AM
<b>First Fridays</b>	7:30 PM (Spanish)
<b>Holy Days</b>	8:00 AM, 12 PM (English) and 7:30 PM (Bi-lingual)
<b>Holidays</b>	Only one Mass at 9:00 AM

**CONFESSIONS:**  
Saturday 3:30pm—4:30pm (Chapel)

**CHURCH HOURS:**  
Weekday: 7:00am—7:00pm  
Saturday: 7:00am—6:00pm  
Sunday: 7:00am—4:00pm

**OFFICE HOURS**  
**Weekday:**  
9:00am—12:00 Noon  
1:00pm—8:30pm  
**Saturday:**  
9:00am—12:00 Noon

**ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY**  
28-46 44th St., Astoria, NY 11103  
718.728.0724—[www.stjosephsch.org](http://www.stjosephsch.org)  
[school@mountcarmelastoria.org](mailto:school@mountcarmelastoria.org)

Follow us on Social Media:  
[@OLMCAstoria](#)



## WEEKLY OFFERING REPORT

The amounts below do not reflect donations made with Faith Direct.

Last weekend's collection: \$4,866  
Same weekend last year: \$5,324



**Annual Catholic Appeal 2023**  
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN



We would like to thank all those generous individuals who made a pledge to the 2023 Annual Catholic Appeal. As of December 11, 2023 we have a total of 190 parishioners who have pledged a total of \$73,034 from which \$70,135 has been collected. Give your support today on behalf of our parish online at [annualcatholicappeal.org](http://annualcatholicappeal.org), scanning the QR code or texting "ACA" to 917-336-1255 or call 718-965-7375 ext. 1602 to have a pledge card mailed to your home.

## JOIN FAITH DIRECT FOR E-GIVING

Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for Christ's arrival and reflect on the amazing Gift that is given to us. As part of this season of giving, many of you are looking for opportunities to give of your time, talents, and resources to support our beloved parish. One easy step you can take is to sign up for eGiving and discover how easy and convenient it will be for you to provide consistent support to the parish ministries that you care about. In this way, you will share the Advent blessings of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace to all in our community throughout the year. To those who are already making your weekly church offering through Faith Direct, we are deeply grateful. To those who have not, we sincerely invite you to consider this as part of your Advent spirituality. Together, let us ensure that our beloved parish receives the necessary support to continue our vital ministry among us.

Your recurring gifts will help strengthen our parish and sustain our ministries throughout the year, even if you need to miss a Sunday service. It's easy to get started. Here are the ways to sign up:

- \* Visit [faith.direct/NY370](http://faith.direct/NY370)
- \* Call the parish office at 718.278.1834
- \* Scan the QR code
- \* Text "Enroll" to 929.254.3850



## MASS ATTENDANCE RECORD

Weekend of December 9/10	Number of Participants
Saturday English Vigil 5:00pm	140
Sunday English 8:00am	117
9:00am Italian	25
9:30am Bilingual	100
10:00am Czech	22
English 11:00am	451
12:30pm Spanish	391
3:00pm Vietnamese	73



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we gather on this Third Sunday of Advent, *Gaudete Sunday*, we are invited to *rejoice* amidst life's complexities. The lighting of the rose candle on our Advent wreath and the rose-colored vestments symbolize joy, gently reminding us of the hope and peace promised by Christ's coming.

Today's readings offer powerful insights into hope and resilience in faith, the virtues which enable us to rejoice even amidst trials. The prophet Isaiah, in the first reading, speaks to the exiled Jews in Babylon, offering a message of liberation and return to their homeland (Is 61:1-2a, 10-11). This echoes in our lives as we seek liberation from various forms of bondage and long for spiritual homecoming.

In the second reading, St. Paul encourages the early Christians to find joy and wait patiently for Christ's return (1 Thes 5:16-24). This guidance is incredibly apt as we confront today's intricate challenges and the heightened stress as the year ends. During this period, feelings of being overwhelmed are common, with stress building up and relationships often feeling the strain. With the holiday season fast approaching, a sense of entrapment in life's difficulties can grow. It's crucial at these times to recall the core of our faith: the promise of liberation that Christ offers.

In the Gospel, we see John the Baptist, imprisoned and grappling with uncertainty, sending his disciples to Jesus with a pivotal question (Jn 1:6-8, 19-28). Although John had previously baptized Jesus, recognizing Him as the Messiah, his circumstances led him to seek reaffirmation. This reaction symbolizes the dynamic interplay of doubt and faith within us all. The Jews' anticipation of a political Messiah contrasted starkly with Jesus' arrival as a humble proponent of peace and love, upending conventional expectations. John's profound query, "*Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?*" mirrors our own moments of questioning and spiritual seeking.

Pope Francis reminds us, "*Even the most fervent believers go through moments of doubt and questioning about God, and it is a good thing, because it helps one see that God does not fit into the little box people make for him. Doubt helps us understand that God is always greater than we imagine him to be. His works are surprising compared to our calculations; his actions are different, always, they exceed our needs and expectations; and therefore, we must never stop seeking him.*" (Angelus Message, December 11, 2022). This perspective is essential as sometimes people find themselves in an "inner jail," unable to recognize the Lord or even trying to hold him "captive" to preconceived ideas about who God must be. In reality, "*One never knows everything about God. Never!*" the Pope said. The Holy Father adds, "*It is a temptation to think one knows everything about other people, too, using one's prejudices to attach rigid labels to others, especially those we feel are different from us.*"

Advent, therefore, is a time to let go and allow oneself to be surprised by God. Like John the Baptist, we may question God's presence and actions in our lives, especially during difficult times. However, it is in these moments that our faith grows.

As we conclude, let us embrace the essence of Advent—a time of joyous expectation and steadfast faith. May the assurance of Christ's imminent arrival, which brought hope to John the Baptist, also comfort and uplift our heart in these days!

Rejoice in the Lord always,

**Msgr. Cuong M. Pham**



Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo,

Al reunirnos en este Tercer Domingo de Adviento, *Domingo de Gaudete*, se nos invita a *alegrarnos* en medio de las complejidades de la vida. El encendido de la vela rosa en nuestra corona de Adviento y los ornamentos de color rosa simbolizan la alegría, recordándonos suavemente la esperanza y la paz que promete la venida de Cristo.

Las lecturas de hoy ofrecen poderosas perspectivas sobre la esperanza y la resiliencia en la fe, virtudes que nos permiten alegrarnos incluso en medio de las pruebas. El profeta Isaías, en la primera lectura, habla a los judíos exiliados en Babilonia, ofreciendo un mensaje de liberación y retorno a su patria (Is 61:1-2a, 10-11). Esto resuena en nuestras vidas mientras buscamos liberación de diversas formas de esclavitud y anhelamos un regreso espiritual.

En la segunda lectura, San Pablo anima a los primeros cristianos a encontrar alegría y esperar pacientemente el regreso de Cristo (1 Tes 5:16-24). Esta guía es increíblemente apropiada mientras enfrentamos los desafíos intrincados de hoy y el estrés aumentado al final del año. Durante este período, es común sentirse abrumado, con el estrés acumulándose y las relaciones a menudo sometidas a presión. Con la temporada navideña acercándose rápidamente, puede crecer la sensación de estar atrapado en las dificultades de la vida. Es crucial en estos momentos recordar la esencia de nuestra fe: la promesa de liberación que Cristo ofrece.

En el Evangelio, vemos a Juan el Bautista, encarcelado y luchando con la incertidumbre, enviando a sus discípulos a Jesús con una pregunta crucial (Jn 1:6-8, 19-28). Aunque Juan había bautizado previamente a Jesús, reconociéndolo como el Mesías, sus circunstancias lo llevaron a buscar reafirmación. Esta reacción simboliza la interacción dinámica de duda y fe en todos nosotros. La anticipación de los judíos de un Mesías político contrastó marcadamente con la llegada de Jesús como un humilde proponente de paz y amor, desafiando las expectativas convencionales. La profunda pregunta de Juan, “¿Eres tú el que ha de venir, o debemos esperar a otro?”, refleja nuestros propios momentos de cuestionamiento y búsqueda espiritual.

El Papa Francisco nos recuerda: “Incluso los creyentes más fervorosos atraviesan momentos de duda y cuestionamiento sobre Dios, y es algo bueno, porque ayuda a ver que Dios no encaja en la pequeña caja que la gente hace para él. La duda nos ayuda a entender que Dios siempre es más grande de lo que lo imaginamos. Sus obras son sorprendentes comparadas con nuestros cálculos; sus acciones son diferentes, siempre, exceden nuestras necesidades y expectativas; y por lo tanto, nunca debemos dejar de buscarlo.” (Mensaje del Ángelus, 11 de diciembre de 2022). Esta perspectiva es esencial ya que a veces las personas se encuentran en una “cárcel interior”, incapaces de reconocer al Señor o incluso intentando mantenerlo “cautivo” a ideas preconcebidas sobre quién debe ser Dios. En realidad, dijo el Papa, “¡Nunca se sabe todo sobre Dios. ¡Nunca! También, es una tentación pensar que uno sabe todo sobre otras personas, usando los prejuicios propios para etiquetar a los demás de manera rígida, especialmente a aquellos que sentimos diferentes a nosotros.”

El Adviento, por lo tanto, es un tiempo para soltarse y dejarse sorprender por Dios. Al igual que Juan el Bautista, podemos cuestionar la presencia y las acciones de Dios en nuestras vidas, especialmente durante los momentos difíciles. Sin embargo, es en estos momentos donde nuestra fe crece.

Al concluir, abracemos la esencia del Adviento: un tiempo de alegre expectación y fe inquebrantable. ¡Que la certeza de la inminente llegada de Cristo, que trajo esperanza a Juan el Bautista, también consuele y eleve nuestro corazón en estos días!

¡Alégrense siempre en el Señor!

**Mons. Cuong M. Pham**

## CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

On Sunday, December 24th, at 9:30 P.M., our parish choir will present a concert of beautiful Christmas music. Come early to Christmas mass and enjoy this wonderful holiday tradition. The concert will feature the English choir, the Mount Carmel String Trio, and choir percussionists. Uplifting music from the 15th to 21st century, will be performed in several languages. All are invited. Bring your family. Admission is free. The concert will be followed by the 10:00pm Christmas mass in English.

## PRAYING FOR THE SICK

Prayer is one of the most powerful tools we have. It's a way for us to communicate with God and obtain His divine intervention. It can help sick people get well again and also gives us the strength in our own weakness and suffering. If you wish your loved ones who is sick to be prayed for at our daily Mass, kindly contact our parish office to place their names in our Prayer List. We are currently praying for **Ed Collins, Jennifer Burton & Claire Kennedy.**

## REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED DECEASED

Remembering our deceased loved ones by having them prayed for at Mass on every first Friday of the month — the day traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is a meaningful way to express our love. Enrollment is \$10 per name. Those enrolled the Purgatorial Society will be remembered for a whole year. We have currently enrolled **Joseph Musacchio, Anita Bactol, Leodegario Salvador, Andrew Beicht, Mercedes Beck, Giovanna Ayoghu, Sofia Harkins, Charlie Harkins and Michael Rozario.**

## DIOCESAN YOUTH HOLY HOURS

The Diocese of Brooklyn & Queens invites all youth and young adults and their families to their monthly Youth Holy Hours. Below are the upcoming dates and locations. For more information please call the parish office.

January 12, 2024 Holy Family, 175-20 74th Avenue, Q  
 February 2, 2024 St. Bernard, 2055 E 69 Street, Brooklyn  
 March 1, 2024 Incarnation, 89-43 Francis Lewis Blvd, Q  
 April 12, 2024 Ss. Peter & Paul, 228 Berry Street, Brooklyn  
 May 3, 2024 Mary's Nativity/St. Ann, 4602 Parsons Blvd, Q  
 June 7, 2024 Holy Family/St. Thomas Aquinas  
 249 9th Street, Brooklyn

## PARISH REGISTRATION

We encourage all who worship with us to consider joining our parish officially. Registering will enable our parish to serve your spiritual needs better. Please return this form in the collection or drop it off at the parish office. Your participation will strengthen your faith and your sense of belonging in God's family.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE CHECK:

New Registration  Changed Address  
 I prefer envelopes  I prefer E-giving

# THIS WEEK AT OUR PARISH

### Sunday, December 17

10:00am—12:00pm	Czech Community	Nazareth
10:00am—12:00pm	Spanish OCIA	Fatima
10:30am—12:30pm	Cursillo	Lourdes A/B
6:00pm—8:00pm	Sagrado Corazon	Lourdes A/B

### Monday, December 18

7:00pm—9:00pm	Practica de Canto	Guadalupe A/B
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### Tuesday, December 19

3:30pm—6:00pm	Porque Ser Catolico?	Fatima
5:30pm—7:00pm	Mariachi School	Balcony
6:00pm—7:00pm	Baptism Instruction	Lourdes A/B
6:00pm—9:00pm	Marriage Encounter	Guadalupe+ Fatima
7:00pm—9:00pm	Coro #1	Nazareth

### Wednesday, December 20

4:00pm—7:30pm	Religious Education	All Rooms
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### Thursday, December 21

10:00am—11:30am	Legion of Mary	Guadalupe A/B
6:00pm—7:30pm	Religious Education	All Rooms
7:30pm—8:30pm	Grupo de Amistad	Lourdes A/B

### Friday, December 22

11am—12:30pm	Porque Ser Catolico?	Fatima
6:30pm—9:00pm	Practica de Instrumentos	Upper Room
6:30pm—9:00pm	Youth Night	Guadalupe A/B
7:00pm—9:00pm	English OCIA	Fatima

### Saturday, December 23

9:00am—4:00pm	Precinct Gathering	Gym
9:00am—1:00pm	AA Meeting	Guadalupe A/B
10:00am—12:00pm	Spanish Children's Choir	Upper Room
5:00pm—7:00pm	Bilingual Choir	Guadalupe A/B
6:30pm—8:00pm	Porque Ser Catolico?	Fatima

## ROSARY SOCIETY

The next Rosary Society meeting will be held on January 7th, 2024. All ladies over 15 years old are welcomed. Refreshments will be served. Bring a friend!



## ASK THE VOCATION DIRECTOR!

I'm here to help as you seek to discover God's call for your life! If you have questions, need to talk through your discernment, or want to make an appointment, please feel free to contact me, **Fr. Chris Bethge**, Vocation Director at 718-827-2454 or email [cbethge@cathedralprep.org](mailto:cbethge@cathedralprep.org)



## REGISTRACION PARROQUIAL

*Registrarse permite que nuestra parroquia les pueda servir sus necesidades espirituales. Por favor devuelva este formulario en la colecta o déjelo en la oficina parroquial. Su participación fortalecerá su fe y su sentido de pertenencia en la familia de Dios.*

Nombre(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ciudad \_\_\_\_\_ Estado \_\_\_\_\_ C. Postal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### POR FAVOR MARCAR:

- Nueva Registración       Cambio de dirección  
 Prefiero Sobres               Donaciones en línea

## RECTORY CLOSINGS

The parish office will be closed on Monday & Tuesday, December 25 & 26, 2023 for Christmas. Please see the Christmas Mass Schedule posted on the Church bulletin boards and on our parish website and social media. The office will resume normal hours on Wednesday, December 27, 2023.

We will also be closed on Monday & Tuesday, January 1 & 2, 2024, for New Years. There will be 2 Masses celebrated in the main Church at 9:00am & 12:00 noon on January 1st and only one Mass celebrated at 9:00am on January 2nd. The office will resume normal hours on Wednesday, January 3, 2024.

## INFANT BAPTISM/ BAUTISMOS

Preparation Meeting	Baptism Ceremony
<b>Tuesday—6:00pm—Institute</b>	<b>12:00pm— Upper Church</b>
December 19, 2023	December 23, 2023
January 23, 2024	January 27, 2024
February 20, 2024	February 24, 2024
March 19, 2024	March 23, 2024
April 23, 2024	April 27, 2024
May TBA	May TBA
June— NO CLASS	No English Baptisms
July 23, 2024	July 27, 2024
August 20, 2024	August 24, 2024
September 24, 2024	September 28, 2024
October 22, 2024	October 26, 2024
November 19, 2024	November 23, 2024
December 17, 2024	December 21, 2024

Reunión de Preparación	Ceremonia de Bautismo
<b>Martes—6:00pm—Instituto</b>	<b>12:00pm—Iglesia de Arriba</b>
9 de Enero, 2024	13 de Enero, 2024
6 de Febrero, 2024	10 de Febrero, 2024
5 de Marzo, 2024	9 de Marzo, 2024
Abril TBA	Abril TBA
Mayo TBA	Mayo TBA
4 de Junio	8 de Junio
9 de Julio	13 de Julio
6 de Agosto	10 de Agosto
10 de Septiembre	14 de Septiembre
8 de Octubre	12 de Octubre
5 de Noviembre	9 de Noviembre
10 de Diciembre	14 de Diciembre

## AVAILABLE NOW! PRINT & DIGITAL AD SPACES

### The Support of Your Business is Greatly Appreciated

**Andrew Martinez** a representative from our bulletin printer, is seeking new ads for our weekly church bulletins. It is the support of the business community that helps to make our church thrive. Please consider purchasing an ad in the back cover of the bulletin as a great way to support our parish and to grow your business.

**Church bulletin advertising** is a cost-effective way to advertise 52 times per year and show support for your local community; in turn, parishioners will support you!

**Digital advertising** allows your business to be front and center to anyone who visits a church profile page on [ParishesOnline.com](http://ParishesOnline.com) — that's approximately 500,000 page views per month!



Andrew Martinez  
 (440)340-8564  
[Amartinez@4lpi.com](mailto:Amartinez@4lpi.com)





**Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church**

23-25 Newtown Avenue - Astoria, NY 11102

**HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE**

**Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve**

5:00pm Family Mass ●

7:00pm Santa Misa ●

10:00pm Christmas Eve Mass ●

11:30pm Vietnamese Mass ●

**Monday, December 25 – Christmas Day**

8:00am, 9:30am (Bilingual), 11:00am English Masses

9:00am Italian Mass (Chapel) ●

10:30am Czech Mass (Chapel)

***NO HAY SANTA MISA A LAS 12:30PM***

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**Sunday, December 31—New Year's Eve**

5:00pm Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God\* ●

\*Note: *Holy Day of Obligation*

**Sunday, January 1, 2023—New Year's Day**

9:00am & 12:00pm ● English Masses

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

\*Note: *Holy Day of Obligation*

Masses with ● will be live-streamed and can be viewed online by visiting [www.mountcarmelastoria.org](http://www.mountcarmelastoria.org), and clicking on either *Facebook* or *YouTube*

*Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas  
and a very Happy, Healthy and prosperous New Year!*

*Msgr. Cuong M. Pham*

*Fr. Mike McHugh, Fr. Hung Tran, Fr. Ed Brady, Fr. Joe Pham,  
Msgr. John Harrington and Deacons Ruben Mendez & Jacob Rodriguez*



**CHRISTMAS AT OUR PARISH 2023**  
**NAVIDAD EN NUESTRA PARROQUIA 2023**

Sunday, December 24th, 2023 at the 5pm Family Mass  
*Domingo 24 de Diciembre—5:00pm Misa Familiar*

**“I’LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS, YOU CAN COUNT ON ME”**

We need 12 parish youngsters to help prepare for a special **FAMILY-CHILDREN’S LITURGY AT 5:00pm ON CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24th**. We plan a living nativity scene. We need actors as angels, shepherds, and a Mary and Joseph.

Please return the form below to Nelly Gutierrez in the parish office or email it to [ccdmountcarmel@gmail.com](mailto:ccdmountcarmel@gmail.com) or [reled@mountcarmelastoria.org](mailto:reled@mountcarmelastoria.org) no later than Monday, December 18th, 2023.

Yes, we’ll be home for Christmas. Please enter our child’s name as a volunteer for Christmas Eve at 5:00pm.

Child’s Name/Nombre del Nino: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Escuela: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Grado: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address/Direccion: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**SAINT OF THE WEEK**

Blessed Maria Franziska Schervier was a German Catholic nun who devoted her life to serving the poor and the sick. She founded the Franciscan Sisters of Aachen and began chapters in the United States where she and her sisters also founded a number of hospitals.

**Prayer**

Almighty, just and merciful God, Blessed Frances Schervier spent her whole life giving back to You all the gifts that You had given her. She cared for the poor and the sick and radiated Your loving presence to all that she met. We beseech You now to glorify your servant, Frances. Give her the honor of sainthood if it is in accordance with Your will. We ask this through Jesus, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

**SPECIAL APPRECIATION**



Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to everyone who contributed their time and effort to plan and organize our Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony last Thursday evening. Special thanks are due to Father Hung Tran, the parish maintenance staff, the volunteers, the choirs and singers, the Mariachis Youth Band and everyone who prepared the delicious refreshments.

The event was further enhanced by the generous toy donation for our children by TJ Max Store in College Point, in collaboration with our outstanding Community Affairs Officer Gabriel Tovar and his team from the 114th Police Precinct. It was an incredibly joyful, uplifting, and entertaining experience for all! We are also grateful to Mr. Joe DiPietro from St. Joseph’s parish for his delightful holiday music and to Mrs. Erika Kirland from the Astoria Civic Association for her charming portrayal of Mrs. Claus this year.

**THANK YOU & CONGRATULATIONS**



We extend our heartfelt thanks to Father Hung Tran and his team of dedicated volunteers from the Hispanic and Vietnamese Communities for their immense effort in planning, designing, and executing this year's magnificent Christmas decorations, both inside and outside the Church. Their exceptional dedication and love for our parish have not gone unnoticed and are deeply cherished by everyone. Their creativity and talents stand out as truly extraordinary. May God bless Father Hung and his incredible team for making the Christmas Season so special for us all. Congratulations on a job exceptionally well done!



## WHY DO CATHOLICS GIVE THE SIGN OF PEACE TO ONE ANOTHER AT MASS?

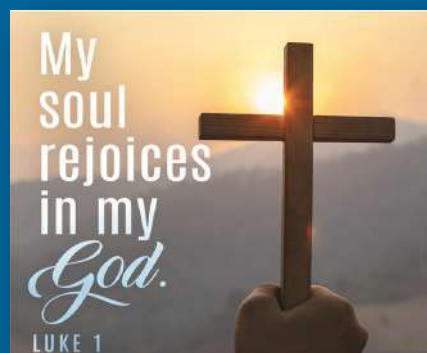
The sign of peace is a part of the Mass that takes place immediately after we offer the Lord's Prayer. Inspired by the Jesus' words to his first followers, we stand together in a spirit of communion to pray as Jesus taught us: "Our Father who art in heaven..." In this prayer, we call for the coming of God's kingdom in all its fullness and ask that God provides for our needs - "Give us, this day, our daily bread" to forgive our sins and to bring us to the joy of heaven.

It is almost natural, then, that the rite of peace would follow. As the celebrant prays that Christ's peace will fill our hearts, our communities, the Church, and the whole world, we extend to those around us a sign of peace (usually a hug or a handshake) as a symbol of the communion that we experience now and will experience forever in the fullness of the reign of God.

We are also reminded of Jesus' teachings that if we are at prayer and remember that a brother or sister is holding something against us, then we are to go and seek reconciliation with them before we continue our prayer

(see Matthew 5:23). And so, the sign of peace also reminds us of the need to truly be in communion united in love and peace with God and one another before we approach the altar to receive the Eucharist.

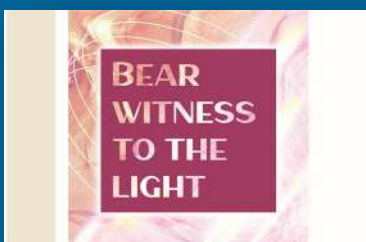
So, the next time you're at Mass and the time comes for the sign of peace, remember that this is a moment to celebrate the gift of Christ's peace that each of us has received from God and to pass that peace along to those around us. We need this moment to practice, because this is also the same peace of Christ that we are instructed to carry out into the world at the end of Mass when the priest or deacon says to us, "Go, in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."



## DIGGING DEEPER INTO SUNDAY'S READINGS

### First Reading

Isaiah rejoices over God's call in his life and the promise of restoration for all nations. As we continue in the season of Advent, what has brought some joy to you or your family?



### Second Reading

Paul encourages the Thessalonians to be people of prayer and joy, open to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Is there anything recently that has brought you joy?

### Gospel Reading

John presents the religious leaders of Jerusalem as puzzled and uncertain as to who John the Baptist was. How do you approach friends or family in your life who are confused or questioning the faith?

## AGRADECIMIENTO ESPECIAL



Expresamos nuestra más profunda gratitud a todos los que dedicaron su tiempo y esfuerzo para planificar y organizar nuestra Ceremonia Anual de Encendido del Árbol de Navidad el pasado jueves por la noche. Un agradecimiento especial al Padre Hung Tran, al personal de mantenimiento de la parroquia, a los voluntarios, a los coros y cantantes, a los Mariachis de la Academia Nuevo Amanecer, y a todos los que prepararon deliciosos refrigerios. El evento se vio aún más realzado por la generosa donación de juguetes para nuestros niños por parte de la tienda TJ Max en College Point, en colaboración con nuestro destacado Oficial de Asuntos Comunitarios Gabriel Tovar y su equipo del Precinto Policial 114. ¡Fue una experiencia increíblemente alegre, edificante y divertida para todos! También expresamos nuestra gratitud a Mr. Joe DiPietro de la parroquia de San José por su encantadora música navideña y a Mrs. Erika Kirland de la Asociación Cívica de Astoria por su encantadora interpretación de Mrs. Claus este año.

## AGRADECIMIENTO Y FELICITACIONES



Extendemos nuestro más sincero agradecimiento al Padre Hung Tran y a su equipo de voluntarios dedicados de las Comunidades Hispana y Vietnamita por su inmenso esfuerzo en planificar, diseñar y ejecutar las magníficas decoraciones navideñas de este año, tanto dentro como fuera de la Iglesia. Su excepcional dedicación y amor por nuestra parroquia no han pasado desapercibidos y son profundamente apreciados por todos. Su creatividad y talentos resaltan como verdaderamente extraordinarios. Que Dios bendiga al Padre Hung y a su increíble equipo por hacer tan especial la temporada navideña para todos nosotros. ¡Felicitaciones por un trabajo excepcionalmente bien hecho! ❄️ 🎄 ✨

16th Annual  
*Christmas Giving Boxes*

**December 2, 2023  
until January 1, 2024**

Our 16th annual "Giving Tree" Donation Boxes to help parishioners in need this Christmas season will start on Saturday, December 2nd, and go through January 1st. One box will be located by the entrance on Newtown Avenue and the other will be by the door of the West Vestibule. Please donate: cash, checks (made out to Our Lady of Mount Carmel), or gift cards. Any donations made during the week, please bring to the Rectory.  
Thank you for your generosity.



16 Evento Anual de  
*Cajas de Donaciones Navideñas*

**2 de Diciembre, 2023  
hasta el 1 de enero, 2024**

Nuestro anual decimosexta arbol de donaciones para ayudar a los feligreses necesitados esta temporada navideña comenzarán el fin de semana, sabado, 2 de diciembre y se extenderán hasta el primero de enero. Una caja estará ubicada junto a la entrada de Newtown Avenue y la otra junto a la puerta en el vestibulo oeste. Por favor donar: efectivo, cheques (a nombre de Nuestra Señora del Monte Carmelo) o tarjetas de regalo. Cualquier donación durante la semana,  
por favor tráigala a la oficina parroquial.  
Gracias por su amabilidad y generosidad.

