

# SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

69 VALLEY STREET, HILLSDALE NJ 07642 • STJOHNHILLSDALE.ORG



**REGISTER  
RENEW  
GROW**

MARCH 31, 2024 EASTER SUNDAY

*"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad."  
— Psalm 118:24*

## PASTOR

Rev. Msgr. Peter Smutelovic

## WEEKEND ASSISTANT

Rev. Bogumil Misiuk

## DEACONS

Deacon Jack Gray

Deacon Albert Ganter

### • RECTORY 201.664.3131

Cathy Williamson, Office Manager/Outreach  
Jennifer Cannon, Business Administrator  
Glen Ford, Plant Superintendent

### • PARISH CENTER 201.666.2707

Cathy Wollyung, Faith Formation  
Kathy Breitenbach, Registrar / CCD  
Roberto Sabastiani, Director of Music  
Sara Armstrong, We Are Young Choir Leader  
Paulette Gilchrist, Safe Environment Coordinator  
Dee Ford, Youth Ministry

### • ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY 201.664.6364

Ann Mitchell, Principal

## MASS SCHEDULE

### SATURDAY VIGIL

5:00 PM

### SUNDAY, THE LORD'S DAY

8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM

### WEEKDAYS

8:00 AM

### HOLY DAYS

8:00 AM, 12:00 PM, 7:00 PM

### CONFESSIONS

- Saturdays 2:00 - 3:00 PM  
- After 8:00 AM Mass—Weekdays  
- Any time by appointment

## Easter Sunday • March 31, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Saint John the Baptist Parish Family  
Dear Friends of our Parish,

Wishes for a very happy, healthy and blessed Easter to you and all your loved ones! I am so grateful to our loving God that we can celebrate Easter 2024 together and once again be with our Risen Lord who is the source of life and every blessing. In Him, our Redeemer, we find during these blessed days the reassurance that in every moment of our lives His redeeming and loving presence is with us and that one day we will share in the fullness of His joy, peace and glory in eternity.

The Gospel story of this Easter Sunday (cf. John 20:1-9) provides for us a precise narrative of what happened on the day of the “very first Easter,” the morning of the Lord’s resurrection. We hear about Mary of Magdala, Simon Peter and John, that other disciple whom Jesus loved, arriving at the empty tomb of the Savior. Together with them we are drawn to the countless perplexities of that spectacular moment, as well as to so many sorrows of the days which preceded this triumphant discovery. Right there, by the empty tomb of their friend Jesus, their hopes confront their disappointments, their joys begin to heal their sorrows, and their faith, little by little, scatters the darkness of their disbelief. Saint John is very honest in describing this internal transformation in the very last part of the Gospel story as he tells us that they witnessed what had happened but not yet fully understood. He needed to share this important detail so their stories of faith, as later described by him and three other Evangelists, may continue to unravel and be always deepened, not through their own efforts and merits, but through the graces and blessings of their friend and Risen Lord.

As we, dear brothers and sisters, as a community of faith gather symbolically around the empty tomb of our Savior and witness together His triumphant resurrection, there is, truly, a piece of Mary of Magdala, Peter, John, other disciples and followers of the Lord in each and every one of us. Here, by His empty tomb, our own hopes confront our disappointments, our joys begin to heal our sorrows, and our faith, little by little, scatters the darkness of our disbelief.

Thank you for being those disciples of the Lord who once again this year proclaim and celebrate our faith in the Risen Lord and our personal resurrection with Him. May the Mother of Jesus and our own Heavenly Mother, Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, Saint John the Baptist and all the Saints of Heaven continue to accompany us and intercede for all of us on our own personal journeys of faith.

-Fr. Peter

### SENDING HEALING PRAYERS TO:

Victoria Davis, John Luke Bechtold, Angela Visentini, Sonia Spagnoli, Lucas Kelly, Al Spiegel, Sr., Debbie Kral, Michelle Mangano, Martin Filon, John Bibby, Michael McKay, James Carbone, Susan Denise, Mary Schubert, Carole Ann Bersano, Tim Mangano, Lourdes Munson, Jim Lyons, Maxine Fleming, Denyse Galda

### REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED:

Theresa Sullivan

## Mass Intentions

### SATURDAY, MARCH 30

8:00 PM People of the Parish

### SUNDAY, MARCH 31

8:00 AM People of the Parish

10:00 AM People of the Parish

12:00 PM People of the Parish

### MONDAY, APRIL 1

8:00 AM Thomas Connolly

### TUESDAY, APRIL 2

8:00 AM Sheehan & Sheridan  
Families

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

8:00 AM The Farley & Hoefling  
Families

### THURSDAY, APRIL 4

8:00 AM Agnes Davis

### FRIDAY, APRIL 5

8:00 AM Buckley & O’Sullivan  
Families

### SATURDAY, APRIL 6

8:00 AM Special Intention A.L.

5:00 PM Gerald S. Crowley  
(20th Anniversary)

### SUNDAY, APRIL 7

8:00 AM Guido Borella

10:00 AM Msgr. Philip Morris

12:00 PM Josephine Y.W. Choo (Living)

THE VOTIVE CANDLE BURNS  
IN MEMORY OF

**SONDRA DI SPIGNO**

AT THE REQUEST OF  
THE JACKSON FAMILY

THE BREAD & WINE ARE GIVEN  
IN MEMORY OF

**THOMAS CONNOLLY**

AT THE REQUEST OF  
NANCY & WILL CAVE





**FAITH + FAMILY + FRIENDS + GROWTH  
THAT IS  
OUR PARISH'S  
FAITH FORMATION**

**REGISTRATION 2024-2025**



Our Faith Formation programs are available to all Catholic children in grades 1 - 8 who are attending public elementary school. Our programs are in person or family at home with gathering once a month during a weekday evening for both children and parents. All families registering for faith formation must be registered parishioners of St. John's Parish Community.

St. John's offers several faith formation programs each year:

**Sunday Weekly Program (Grades 1st - 6th)**

**Summer Program with Monthly Family Gatherings (Grades 1st - 8th)**

**Home Program with Monthly Family Gatherings (Grades 1st - 6th)**

**Junior High Home Program (for children entering Grades 7 and 8)**

Families who currently have a child registered in St. John's Faith Formation Program have received information via email and the link to register.

Registration for the Summer Program will close on Sunday, April 7, and other programs by May 15th. This is for current registered families.

New families to St. John's Parish please contact Kathy Breitenbach, Registrar, Faith Formation: kbreitenbach@stjohnhillsdale.com for further info.

# THE CATHOLIC TABLE

## FINDING JOY WHERE FAITH AND FOOD MEET

### *Faith Video & Discussion Study*



It's unavoidable. We all must eat. But as Catholics, we know that how we eat matters as much as what we eat. Through this video and discussion series, learn how food is a sign of God's love and a foretaste of the Eucharist.

In The Catholic Table video series, you'll discover what the Church teaches about creation, the body, feasting, fasting, the Eucharist—and so much more.

**Thursdays  
April 18 - May 23\*  
7:30 - 9:00pm**

For more information, please contact:

**Olivia Carbonaro**  
carbono819@gmail.com  
201.248.3391

**Linda Parisi**  
lppeanuts@msn.com  
201.906.1041

**\*The last session on May 23 will run  
6:30 - 8:30pm for a special gathering.**



**REGISTER**  
**RENEW**  
**GROW**

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
HILLSDALE, NJ



[renew.stjohnhillsdale.org](http://renew.stjohnhillsdale.org)

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## Our Logo, as a Description of our Journey

- ✠ **Register – Renew – Grow** are the three words which describe the journey of our parish family through this important initiative, and our desire for an ongoing renewal and dynamic growth, welcoming new members of this special community of faith, and serving with love, dedication and joy to all members of our community.
- ✠ **The Risen Christ among his disciples and friends** is painted on the western wall of our church's entrance area. This beautiful rendition of the Lord's constant presence in the community of the Early Church was "donated to us," by the previous generations of our parishioners, especially those who sacrificed and built St. John the Baptist Church, as a reminder and affirmation of Christ dwelling in our parish family. As he did throughout his numerous revelations to his disciples and friends following the Resurrection, even in our own times Jesus continually reassures us of his constant presence among us. He also sends us to go into our contemporary world in his name, to bring those precious gifts of faith, hope, and love to others, as his gifts.
- ✠ **A new branch and leaves growing out of W in the word RENEW** is a symbol of our community's desire to grow, prosper, and constantly renew itself through our fidelity to the Gospel, trust in God, love of others, dedication to our community, as well as our willingness to sacrifice for our parish. That new branch and those new leaves are also our tribute to all our new parishioners, those who have recently joined us on our journeys of Christian discipleship, as well as those who will become members of our community in the future.
- ✠ **The arrow in W in the word GROW** is a symbol of spiritual and personal growth which our community wants to bring about in the lives of all its members. It is also a symbol of our welcoming spirit and the desire to welcome, embrace and accompany all new brothers and sisters who desire to join our community. As the arrow points "higher," it is a symbol of our reliance on God's presence, protection, and guidance. By pointing toward the new leaves, it gives testimony to our common desire for growth as our constant priority, and by its bent shape our recognition that we are willing to overcome, with God's help, various challenges on our personal journey.



# What is Next?

## OUR PHASE 1

### Holy Thursday, March 28, 2024 —> Pentecost, May 19, 2024

- A)** On Holy Thursday 2024, also in honor of that very special day when Jesus gathered his Apostles and gave them the great gift of the Eucharist, his very Body and Blood, and instructed them to gather, celebrate, grow and do this always “in remembrance of me”, we launched our Register - Renew - Grow parish journey of updating all our parishioners’ data and contact information, in the process of our parish’s renewal and growth. Our secure website [renew.stjohnhillsdale.org](https://renew.stjohnhillsdale.org) contains a renewal and registration form which is very easy to complete, and it should take no more than 5 minutes of your time. For those who would rather fill out a paper renewal and registration form, those will be provided throughout this entire process in our church’s entrance and exit areas.
- B)** In a parallel process, we will reach out, via a personal letter to all our parishioners who have not been active in our parish during the past two years, who continue to receive, at our parish’s expense, donation envelopes and who have not made any (even \$1) contribution to the parish community during these past two years. Through our internal review, we have identified a very large number of registered individual parishioners and families who are in this category. They will all be very kindly asked to reconsider their relationship and commitment to our parish.

The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”. This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.”

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013



So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things  
have passed away; behold, new things have come.”

—2 Corinthians 5:17

Since May 2022, and on various occasions throughout these past almost two years, we have been on a difficult and challenging journey of cleaning on the Pascack Brook (West) side of our Saint John the Baptist parish grounds, years of post-floods debris, dead trees, piles of trash washed out on our property, and countless dead trees of various sizes, some extremely large and dangerous. During that process we have rediscovered not only that “God helps those who help themselves” but we have met Christ and His helping hand and caring heart in the lives of those who have assisted us with kindness, concern, and generosity. We are so very grateful.



BEFORE







Our sincere thanks and prayers to Mr. Sean Flaherty and his wonderful team at Jeff Smith All Seasons Tree, Mr. Kevin Downes and all generous friends at DTS & Downes Tree Service, Inc., as well as to Mr. Jeff Sandberg, his family, and all dedicated coworkers at Victoria's Nursery in Paramus, for their extensive pro-bono assistance, kindness, generosity, and their caring hearts. May God bless them and reward them, many times.



**AFTER**



**& HELP  
YOUR**  
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
HILLSDALE, NJ





# HAPPY & BLESSED EASTER FROM OUR ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY

*When ground was broken almost 70 years ago, for the new St. John the Baptist School on July 4, 1954, it brought to fulfillment the dream of the Pastor, Fr. Thomas J. Duffy. Through a very successful fundraising campaign, the school opened on September 12, 1955, with Sr. Maria Cecilia, SSJ as the first principal. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill were placed in charge of the school's daily operations. The student population increased rapidly.*

*Today, St. John's Academy, a Middle States Accredited and National Blue Ribbon School, continues to offer an academically excellent Catholic education to students in pre-k 3 through eighth grade. With a growing enrollment of over 300 students, families come from over 50 zip codes to attend St. John's Academy. Under the leadership of the Principal, Mrs. Ann Mitchell, the dedicated faculty and staff deliver a comprehensive, faith-based, and rigorous education to SJA students. In partnership with St. John the Baptist Parish, the Academy strives to educate, evangelize, and bring the love of Jesus to the lives of our students and their families.*



*As we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Savior, Jesus Christ, our St. John's Academy Faculty, Staff, and Students wish you and your families a happy, healthy, and blessed Easter!*



## St. John's Academy

FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE



Offering a  
Faith-Based  
Education from  
PreK 3 - 8th Grade



[sjahillsdale.org](http://sjahillsdale.org)

460 Hillsdale Avenue

Hillsdale, NJ

(201)664-6364



# CHRIST THROUGH HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION GIFTED US A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: THE RIGHT TO HOPE



[...] At dawn the women went to the tomb. There the angel says to them: “Do not be afraid. He is not here; for he has risen”. They hear the words of life even as they stand before a tomb... And then they meet Jesus, the giver of all hope, who confirms the message and says: “Do not be afraid”. Do not be afraid, do not yield to fear: This is the message of hope. It is addressed to us, today. These are the words that God repeats to us this very night.

Today we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us: the right to hope. It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is not mere optimism; it is not a pat on the back or an empty word of encouragement, uttered with an empty smile. No! It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own. Over these weeks, we have kept repeating, “All will be well”, clinging to the beauty of our humanity and allowing words of encouragement to rise up from our hearts. But as the days go by and fears grow, even the boldest hope can dissipate. Jesus’ hope is different. He plants in our hearts the conviction that God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave he brings life.

The grave is the place where no one who enters ever leaves. But Jesus emerged for us; he rose for us, to bring life where there was death, to begin a new story in the very place where a stone had been placed. He, who rolled away the stone that sealed the entrance of the tomb, can also remove the stones in our hearts. So, let us not give in to resignation; let us not place a stone before hope. We can and must hope, because God is faithful. He did not abandon us; he visited us and entered into our situations of pain, anguish and death. His light dispelled the darkness of the tomb: today he wants that light to penetrate even to the darkest corners of our lives.

This is the Easter message, a message of hope. It contains a second part, the sending forth. “Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee” (Mt 28:10), Jesus says. “He is going before you to Galilee”, the angel says. The Lord goes before us; he goes before us always. It is encouraging to know that he walks ahead of us in life and in death; he goes before us to Galilee, that is, to the place which for him and his disciples evoked the idea of daily life, family and work. Jesus wants us to bring hope there, to our everyday life. [...] Returning to Galilee means remembering that we have been loved and called by God. This is always the point from which we can set out anew, especially in times of crisis and trial, remembering always our Galilee.

*Pope Francis, Easter Vigil 2020 Homily (an excerpt) April 11, 2020 – the early weeks of the global COVID-19 pandemic*

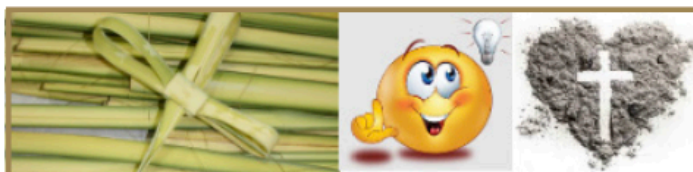
## Prayer for Easter

Almighty Father,  
We thank you for the gift of your son,  
Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead  
and redeemed humankind.

Fill us with the fire of the Holy Spirit,  
that we may be faithful disciples  
and enthusiastic witnesses of our Catholic  
faith.

Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed.

Amen



## What do we do with our Blessed Palms and Palm Crosses from previous years?

We respectfully collect them and then burn them, during a prayerful gathering. Ashes from our palms and palm crosses **become another precious symbol of our faith and our love of God.** These are the ASHES which we use on ASH WEDNESDAY of the following year in order to mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross, as a mark of our humility, repentance, and desire for spiritual growth.

During the coming weeks you can bring your older palms and palm crosses and place them into designated baskets by our church entrance areas. Thank You!

# OUR PARISH STEWARDSHIP

## SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2024

|                                 |                  | 2023             | BUDGET          |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Envelope & In Pew Giving:       | \$9,952          | \$ 7,245         | \$7,900         |
| Online Giving via Faith Direct: | 5,105            | 5,101            | \$5,000         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>\$15,057*</b> | <b>\$ 12,346</b> | <b>\$12,900</b> |

*\*Palm Sunday, in 2023 this Sunday was the 5th Sunday of Lent.*

*Your financial support enables our parish home to continue the mission of the Church.  
Thank you and God bless you!*



Thank you for your support & personal sacrifices on behalf of our parish.  
**Please continue to generously support our spiritual home.**

*"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."*

*Saint Paul's Letter to Galatians 6:2*

## WE ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE

**Marie & Jamie Rocco, who have underwritten the cost of the Paschal Candle in Loving Memory of James Martorano.** The Paschal Candle is lit for the first time at the Easter Vigil and signifies the light of Christ. It will **adorn our sanctuary throughout the year.**

And a big thank you to all our parishioners who contributed toward the beautiful Easter flowers.

**THANK YOU!!!**

## BEREAVEMENT GROUP MINISTRY at ST. PIUS X PARISH, OLD TAPPAN

*"Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted."*

Everyone will experience grief at some point in time and it can be overwhelming. If you are grieving the loss of a spouse, parent, child, sibling or other family or friend, you are not alone in your grief. St. Pius X Parish (268 Old Tappan Road, Old Tappan) is holding a series of bereavement meetings on Wednesdays at 7:00 - 8:00pm in their chapel. The meetings are on April 3, 10, 17, 24 and May 1, 8, 15, 22. This is a short time to hopefully help you to feel a lot better. Repeat grieverers are welcome. Please contact Lorraine Delling at: lldelling@gmail.com or 201-722-0982.



## ARCHDIOCESE of NEWARK ANNUAL<sup>2024</sup> APPEAL

### PLEASE HELP US REACH OUR GOAL!

So far we have received \$84,093 in pledges & donations for the 2024 Archbishop's Annual Appeal. We are very grateful to the 168 families and individual parishioners who have helped us so far with this campaign.

Please complete a pledge envelope - they are at the doors of the church, and have also been mailed to your home. The envelopes may be returned in the collection basket or to the Rectory Office, or even mailed directly to the Archdiocese. You may also make your pledge online at [www.rcan.org/sharing](http://www.rcan.org/sharing) or by using the QR code. Please indicate on all pledges and donations that you are a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Hillsdale and that your donation should be credited to our Parish.

You may view the Cardinal's video with his presentation as well as his pledge of transparency and full accountability of the collected donations at the website above.

May God bless you always for helping those less fortunate than ourselves. Let us make our annual goal together, as a family of faith. Every donation counts and every donation makes a big difference, as every donation demonstrates far beyond our local area the great spirit of Saint John the Baptist Parish!



**"He has risen. This is the heart of our faith. Mary was a silent witness of all these events. Let us ask her to help us also to receive the fullness of this Easter message."**

— St. John Paul II (1920 - 2005)