



**Welcome to Mr. Donald Caputo,
our new Director of Lifelong Faith Formation**

St. John the Baptist Church, Hillsdale NJ

Dear Brothers and Sisters of our Saint John the Baptist Parish,
Dear Families of Saint John's Academy, and all Dear Friends of our Parish,

It is with great joy that on this liturgical Memorial of the Passion of Saint John the Baptist - our heavenly patron - we welcome Mr. Donald Caputo as our new staff member and our new Director of Lifelong Faith Formation, effective September 1, 2026. In this new and vital role for our community's future and for the personal spiritual growth of each of our parishioners - from our precious newborns to those blessed elderly brothers and sisters who are preparing to meet and eternally embrace our loving God - the new Director of Lifelong Faith Formation will be our catechetical leader responsible - in close collaboration with the Pastor - for developing, coordinating and implementing a comprehensive lifelong Catholic faith formation within our parish, while assisting our wonderful Saint John's Academy in the same mission. He will oversee catechesis for children, youth, and adults, sacramental preparation and other initiatives that foster evangelization, discipleship and active participation in the Sunday Liturgies and the life of the Church. In addition to his daily collaboration with the Pastor, the new Director will collaborate with other clergy serving in the parish, parish staff, catechists, and ministry leaders to nurture a vibrant, mission driven parish culture rooted in the Gospel.

Donald comes to us with a deep love for the Catholic Church and the Lord's precious gift of the Eucharist, extensive pastoral experience, and a joyful heart for the Church's catechetical and evangelizing mission. Currently in formation and discerning the vocation to the Permanent Diaconate, he views this new, challenging but exciting role as his true "call within a call."

In a few days, on September 10, 2026, the Catholic Church will remember the 80th Anniversary of a profound spiritual experience of a young religious sister whom the entire world would later know as Mother Teresa of Calcutta. On September 4, 2026, we will also remember and celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Saint Mother Teresa's canonization. On one of the most memorable days of her life, September 10, 1946, while traveling and praying on a train in India on the way to her spiritual retreat, Mother Teresa received what she often described as "her second calling" or "a call within a call." During that God-sent spiritual moment, Mother Teresa experienced an irresistible call of the Lord to leave her original religious community and dedicate her life to the service of the 'poorest of the poor,' and to forming a new religious community of the Missionaries of Charity, now numbering over 5,000

religious sisters selflessly ministering in countless places all around the world.

Although the spiritual term “a call within a call” is often connected to the life-altering experience of Mother Teresa, the over two-thousand year history of the Catholic Church is certainly filled with countless examples of the disciples and friends of Jesus who have experienced their own “call within a call.” First among them were the Apostles, whom Jesus called from their “original” life mission to the ministry of teaching, preaching, service and sacrifice. Our new Director of Lifelong Formation describes his calling to the ministry of teaching and catechetical work in the Church as his “call within a call.” While throughout many years of his life Donald had cherished his personal relationship with Christ and the vital importance of the Catholic faith in his own personal life, some years ago that original call evolved into “a new call of the Lord” - to share his personal faith and talents with other brothers and sisters through the ministry of catechetics, faith formation and teaching.

To this now full-time parish ministry in our parish community, Donald brings also a myriad of personal talents and professional experiences from his distinguished 40-year career in finance and legal services, and especially from the past two decades of professional engagements as Chief Internal Auditor for a prestigious global law firm with about 25 world-wide offices spanning through the United States, and other countries of the Americas, Europe, Africa and Middle East. Following a recent merger with another major global law firm, which has been described as “one of the largest and most significant transatlantic law firm mergers in legal industry history,” his responsibilities extended to 47+ global offices, with over 4,000 attorneys. During his years of dedicated work as Chief Internal Auditor, Donald not only traveled the world and daily interacted with lawyers and professionals from various countries and cultures, but within that unique and extensive work mission - in full collaboration with the global law firm partners - he daily strived to promote the institutional culture of accountability, renewal, transparency and rapid growth.

Donald holds a Master of Arts Degree in Theology with honors from Saint Joseph’s College of Maine, and has earned multiple certifications in Catholic Doctrine, Lay Leadership, and Catechesis from the Archdiocese of Newark. He joins us from Immaculate Conception Parish in Secaucus, where he served in extensive pastoral roles, including, Director of OCIA Adult Formation, Assistant Parish Catechetical Leader, Teacher of religious education and adult formation classes, Confirmation Sacramental Leader, Altar Server Training Leader, and even the Parish Bulletin Editor. Donald is a dedicated Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus, recently recognized by his Council as a Knight of the Year. With his profound love for the Eucharist as “the source and summit of the Christian life” (cf. Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, n.11), he has also served as a Sacristan, Eucharistic Minister, and Lector, while remaining actively engaged in youth, vocations, singles and family parish ministries.

Please join me in extending our warm St. John’s welcome to Donald as he begins his important mission and ministry among us!

May our Heavenly Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Saint John the Baptist continue to intercede for Donald and his new “Spiritual Home” - our Saint John the Baptist Parish Community.

With prayers and gratitude for all your dedication and support, as we journey together in our personal searches for the Lord’s “call within a call” in our own lives,

Msgr. Peter Smutelovic
Pastor