

# Old St. Joseph's Church

Est. 1733 | Philadelphia's Jesuit Parish

321 Willings Alley  
Philadelphia PA 19106  
215-923-1733  
www.oldstjoseph.org

January 6, 2019 | The Epiphany of the Lord

## Epiphany and Politics

I grew up in Epiphany Parish in northern New Jersey. As a young boy I was envious of the kids who came from the surrounding parishes like St. Nicholas or St. John's. Their parishes had names that everyone could understand. No one among my peers—including me—had the faintest idea what “Epiphany” meant. Then when we got a little older, we were told that the word “Epiphany” refers to the Three Wise Men. Not very helpful. How do you get from Three Wise Men to the word “Epiphany?”

If you too are a little confused, welcome to the club. But over time, I did catch on. Now Epiphany is one of my favorite feasts in the liturgical calendar. And lately, Epiphany has become probably the Sunday celebration most relevant to a crucial political issue facing our country.

True, religion and politics are not the same. But in many ways for a believer they shape one another. If our politics are divorced from our deepest convictions and values, our nation's policies will end up a total mess. That's not to say that religion gives us practical answers to public issues. When we use religion that way, misguided ideologies rule the day and our policy decisions end up a total mess. (There are many ways to end up a total mess!) So, how politics and religion interact is not simplistic, but a serious, even profound, truth.

Take, for example, the nationalistic spirit that seems to be sweeping so many countries today, especially our own. America First! We can certainly debate what that political rallying cry is supposed to



mean. Does it express the legitimate right and responsibility of a nation to protect its own citizens, and its borders and to advance their interests? Or does “America First” mean there is little obligation either to respect the legitimate interests of other peoples or to act responsibly as a member of the world community?

And that's where the feast of the Epiphany—and

*--Continued inside*



Old St. Joseph's is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are in the rear of the church.

## This Week at Old St. Joseph's

Date		Mass Intention and Presider	Calendar Events	
Mon	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ	6:00 PM	PREP
Tues	12:05 PM	<i>Barbara Ann Giannaccari (D)</i> Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	12 Noon	Faith, Food, and Friends (Barbelin)
			7:00 PM	Young Adult Spirituality Night (Barbelin)
			7:00 PM	Pre-Baptism Class (Drexel)
			7:00 PM	Book Group (Loyola)
Wed	12:05 PM	<i>Edward &amp; Mary Britt Families (D)</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ		
Thurs	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	12 Noon	Faith, Food, and Friends (Barbelin)
			7:00 PM	Schola Cantorum Rehearsal
Fri	12:05 PM	<i>Michael Stairs (D)</i> Presider: Fr. Dougherty SJ		
Sat	12:05 PM	<i>Old St. Joseph's Memorial Society</i> Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ		
	5:30 PM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ		
Sun	7:30 AM	Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ		
	9:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	9:30 AM	Children's Liturgy of the Word (Barbelin)
	11:30 AM	Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ	5:30 PM	Loyola Choir Rehearsal (Church)
	6:30 PM	Presider: Fr. O'Donnell SJ	5:30 PM	YAC Pre-Mass Reflection (Greaton)

In your prayers,  
please remember our sick and homebound brothers and sisters  
and our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital.

Adeline Acerno, Teresa Aponte, Louis Balestrucci, Rick Bravo, Debbie Brooks, Christopher Browne, Tony Corvaia, Melissa Counsellor, Charlotte Croce, Ann Crowther, Simeon Crowther, Fred DiStefano, Pat Farris, Lenny Felixson, Fr. Mike Hricko SJ, Aaron Hull, Edward Jacobs, Marie Jacobs, Mary Jacobs, Janet Jeitner, Tamae Kan, Catherine Keddie, David Luerssen, Fr. Jerry McAndrews SJ, James McBride, Jerry McBride, Christine Mari-Mazzola, Allen May, Angelo Miczza, D. Minter, Catherine O'Brien, Bernie Paquett, Joanna Pearl, Lucy Pearl, Betty Farris Pfeiffer, Colleen Raymond, Kim Reed, Ursula Reed, Joan Russo, Steve Saunders, Barbara Schmidt, Mida Skalamera, Sara Smith, Janet Street, Ed Tomezsko, Arlene Tomlin, Thomas Turnbull, Patricia Yusko, Mickey Zippo.

### *Bringing Communion to the Homebound*

*When people are confined to home, they can remain connected to our shared worship by receiving Communion at home. If you, a family member, friend or neighbor (with their approval of course), would like to receive Communion at home, contact the Parish Rectory to arrange for a parish Eucharistic Minister to visit.*

*--continued from first page*

the Three Wise Men--come in. It injects a little religion and the vision of faith into a very complicated political debate about nationalism that has all sorts of implications for our own nation and the welfare of millions of other human beings on our planet.

First of all, the current debate about nationalism is not unique to our age. It's a perennial issue for powerful nations throughout history. Perhaps surprisingly, it's a constant undercurrent throughout much of the Bible. True, you obviously have to make adjustments to the particular historical circumstances. But there is a basic parallel, nevertheless, to the contemporary debate.

The people of Old Testament Israel knew they were special. But what did that "exceptionalism" (to use the modern term) mean? They had to struggle long and hard with that question. On the one hand, it was a privilege. They had the Covenant, a special relationship with the God of all the world. No other people enjoyed the closeness of God as they did. God, they thought, would always be on their side. Naturally enough, they interpreted this favoritism as invincibility in battle and unlimited prosperity at home. But the Biblical prophets continually challenged these militaristic and materialistic aspirations. For the prophets, the call of Israel was not a privilege granting unlimited benefits but a moral mission in disguise, demanding selfless commitment. Israel was to be a beacon of light, shining out to all the nations. Israel's mission was to point the way to God's law, to be celebrated at a great banquet on Mount Zion to which all peoples were to be invited. It was the ultimate United Nations expressing the finest destiny of the human family.

The evangelist Matthew was steeped in this tradition and he wanted to join the coming of Christ into the world with this prophetic vision of the mission of Israel. Jesus cannot be restricted to our Matthew's Gospel, that theme is first introduced

here in his infancy narrative. That is Matthew's motivation for adding the strange story of the Magi, which appears narrow categories, Matthew wants to say, because his meaning is for all peoples. Remember how Matthew ends his Gospel with the great commissioning from Jesus to the apostles to "make disciples of all nations"? Like so much else in only in his Gospel. They were exotic ambassadors from alien eastern lands who came to worship the newborn Jesus. For Matthew, Jesus is not only the Jewish Messiah; he is the Light for all nations.

So much for religion! What about the politics? This religious influence points away from a political stance of self-aggrandizing privilege to a sense of moral vision encompassing a fundamental unity in the human family. From this perspective, it's rather jarring, therefore, to hear the demeaning descriptions of caravans of "aliens" invading our country who bring with them nothing but drugs, disease, crime and alleged diseases that fortunately have been rendered virtually extinct throughout the world. Family bonds are severed as a deterrent. Environmental issues that influence the well-being and livelihood of every inhabitant on the planet--especially the poor--are reduced to short term economic interests of American workers, possibly with only dubious justification. This version of "America First" raises serious moral concerns, inspired by a religious perspective that flows directly from the Biblical tradition.

None of this discussion solves the immigration crisis or the environmental dilemma or the associated economic problems. But people of Biblical faith and others of goodwill bring vitally important values to the table where these issues need to be debated and decided. And our country discounts this input and excuses our political leaders from the necessary accountability only at its own peril. And perhaps that is the most valid reason for all of us to be so seriously concerned about what is happening in America today.

*Walter F. Modrys SJ  
Pastor*

*Front page: The Adoration of the Magi, an oil painting on wood attributed to the workshop of Hieronymus Bosch, Philadelphia Museum of Art. The work is in the public domain work and can be accessed on commons.wikimedia.org.*

# Announcements

## Helping Out in the Neighborhood

The Shine Program is held every Sunday from 7:30-9:30 AM at Old Pine Community Center at 401 Lombard Street. The program serves breakfast to homeless and low-income members of the community and also provides showers, clothing, and take-away lunches. Volunteers are needed from 7:00-10:00 AM to help set up tables, serve coffee and breakfast, staff the clothing station, pack take-away lunches, and clean up afterwards. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Jennifer Nguyen at [Jennifer@oldpinecommunitycenter.org](mailto:Jennifer@oldpinecommunitycenter.org).

## Jesuit Volunteer Corps

Are you interested in full-time service? Do you want to work on the front lines of social justice and live intentionally with other young leaders? You can put your faith into action with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. JVC places young professionals across the country to help create a more just and hopeful world. Interested? Contact Rob Roa at [rroa@jesuitvolunteers.org](mailto:rroa@jesuitvolunteers.org).

## Thank you!

Many, many thanks to all who made OSJ's Christmas liturgies a lovely and prayerful experience for our community and our guests! Much gratitude to the musicians, ministers of hospitality, lectors, liturgical ministers, and all whose seen and unseen preparation and participation came together on these days.

Special thanks to longtime parishioner **Ron Rex Piselli** of Piselli Funeral Chapels for the loan of his beautiful antique *Gesu Bambino* statue which adorned OSJ's Sacred Heart altar during this Christmas season.

## Old St. Joseph's Prayer List

In the spirit of new year's resolutions, we resolve to regularly update the bulletin's prayer list. To that end, please let us know if you would like a name to remain on the current list by **January 13**. As always, you may continue to add names at any time by emailing [office@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:office@oldstjoseph.org), calling 215-723-1733 or leaving a message in the parish office. Thank you!

# Announcements

## Young Adult Community

### Spirituality Night

*Who Do You Say I Am? Naming Christ in Word, Art and Song.* Christmas may be over, but that doesn't mean we can't still reflect on our relationship to Christ and His name. Join us on **Tuesday, January 8** for a night of art, reflection, and discussion ... and even a little song perhaps, as we explore the meanings of the names we can and do call Christ. (This night will be loosely inspired by the O Antiphons from the last seven days of Advent.) Spirits will start in Barbelin Hall at 7:00 PM; prayer will begin at 7:30 PM. We hope to see you there! Contact Jenn at [jennlydic@gmail.com](mailto:jennlydic@gmail.com) with questions.

## OSJ Book Group

The Book Group will meet this **Tuesday, January 8 at 7:30 PM** in the Loyola Room to discuss Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*.

## Online Giving

The following collections are now active on the online giving website:

**Christmas Collection**, through January 13  
**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**, through January 13.

## Centering Prayer

The centering prayer group will meet on **Wednesday, January 16, 6:30-8:30 PM** in the Drexel Parlor of the rectory. The meeting will include discussion of centering prayer followed by evening prayer with a period of centering. Anyone interested in contemplative prayer is welcome to join us. For further information, contact Christine Szczepanowski at 267-250-3049 or [christinesz52@gmail.com](mailto:christinesz52@gmail.com).

## *Requiescat in Pace*

Old St. Joseph's parishioner **Hugh McNicholas** died on Sunday, December 23, 2018. His Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Old St. Joseph's Church on January 2. Please keep Hugh's wife Teresa and their family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.

**Theresa DePasquale**, sister of longstanding OSJ parishioner Joseph Mingroni, passed away on December 22 and was buried from St. Nicholas of Tolentine in South Philadelphia on December 27. Please keep the Mingroni family in your thoughts and prayers.

## Mark Your Calendar for January 21

On **Monday, January 21 at 7:30 PM**, OSJ will join St. Joseph's Prep in hosting an evening of discussion about the state of civil rights in the US today. Guest speakers will be Sean Carroll SJ of the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales AZ and Alana Lee of Philadelphia's Gesu School. All are welcome to join us in the church for conversation; refreshments will follow in Barbelin Hall.

## Time to Update!

**Altar Servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, and Ushers:** please remember to update your online profile by **January 15** for the February 1-March 31 ministry schedule. New volunteers are always welcome to these ministries. Scheduling is flexible and training will be provided! Sign up on the Ministry Scheduling Program at [www.oldstjoseph.org](http://www.oldstjoseph.org).

# INFORMATION

## Rectory Office Hours

Monday through Friday: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM  
Sunday: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

## Mass Times

Monday through Saturday: 12:05 PM  
Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday: 5:30 PM  
Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM and 6:30 PM  
Holy Days: 12:05 and 7:30 PM

## Medical Emergency

In a medical emergency when the need for a priest is urgent, please call the rectory.

## Hearing Enhancements

Old St. Joseph's is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are available in the rear of the church.

## Registration

Persons who want to register as parishioners should complete a parish registration form and return it to the rectory office by mail or in person. Registration forms are available in the rectory office during normal office hours, on the bookcases in the back of the church and online at [www.oldstjoseph.org](http://www.oldstjoseph.org).

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monday through Saturday: 11:30 AM to noon or by appointment

## Sacrament of Baptism

Persons wanting to arrange a baptism should call Fr. Dougherty at the parish office at least two months before the desired date to arrange catechesis and the baptism celebration.

## The Sacrament of Anointing

The Sacrament of Anointing (the sacrament of the sick) is administered during the 12:05 PM Mass on the first Saturday of each month. Homebound or hospitalized persons wanting to receive the Sacrament of Anointing should call the parish office.

## Sacrament of Matrimony

Persons wanting to be married in the parish should call Fr. O'Donnell at the parish office at least nine months before the desired date.

## Rite of Christian Initiation

Unbaptized adults who are considering baptism into the Catholic Church, baptized Catholics who have received no other sacraments and who want to be confirmed and to receive First Eucharist, and baptized non-Catholics who are considering full communion in the Catholic Church should call Fr. O'Donnell at the parish office.

## Mass of Christian Burial

The funeral director should call the parish office.

## Pastor

Fr. Walter Modrys SJ ([pastor@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:pastor@oldstjoseph.org))

## Parochial Vicar

Fr. Edward O'Donnell SJ ([eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org))

## In Residence

Br. Robert Carson SJ

Fr. Edward Dougherty SJ ([dougherty@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:dougherty@oldstjoseph.org))

## Pastoral Associate

BJ Brown ([bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org))

## Business Manager

Eric German ([germane@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:germane@oldstjoseph.org))

## Director of Music

Mark Bani ([music@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:music@oldstjoseph.org))

## Parish Offices

([office@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:office@oldstjoseph.org))

## PREP Coordinator

Christine Szczepanowski ([prep@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:prep@oldstjoseph.org))

## Faith, Food & Friends Director

Deborah Hluchan ([faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org))

## Parish Pastoral Council

Rana McNamara and Richard Le, co-chairs  
([osjpc@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:osjpc@oldstjoseph.org))

## Parish Finance Council

Paul Shay, chair

## Historic Preservation Corporation Board

Fr. Walter Modrys SJ, president

## Adult Education

Rita O'Brien and Jeanmarie Zippo  
([adulted@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:adulted@oldstjoseph.org))

## Eldership

Joan Slavin ([joanslavin@aol.com](mailto:joanslavin@aol.com))

## Parish Life

Joe Casey ([joetcasey@aol.com](mailto:joetcasey@aol.com))

## Ignatian Spirituality and Formation

John Bitterman ([osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org))

## Women, Faith and Fellowship

Rana McNamara ([wff@oldstjoseph.org](mailto:wff@oldstjoseph.org))

## Young Adult Community

Jenn Lydic and Megan Prilutski ([osjyac@gmail.com](mailto:osjyac@gmail.com))

## Altar Servers

Maria Ramirez ([mathra71@yahoo.com](mailto:mathra71@yahoo.com))

## Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Bill Stewart ([wstewart@kaplaw.com](mailto:wstewart@kaplaw.com))

## Hospital Ministry

Luanne Balestrucci ([lbalestrucci@yahoo.com](mailto:lbalestrucci@yahoo.com))

## Homebound Ministry

Neal Hébert ([neal9536@gmail.com](mailto:neal9536@gmail.com))

## Lectors

Lou Anne Bulik ([labulik@yahoo.com](mailto:labulik@yahoo.com))

## Ushers

Nikola Sizgorich ([niksiz@icloud.com](mailto:niksiz@icloud.com))

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

Peggy Connolly ([pmcon@comcast.net](mailto:pmcon@comcast.net))