



ST. MARY'S & ST. PATRICK'S NEWSLETTER



March 21 & 28, 2021 • Edition 31 • Weeks 53 & 54

Keeping us connected during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Fr. Scott's Sharing Spot

Dear Parish Family....

A year ago this weekend, we were beginning three months in the desert. As Coronavirus swept over our communities and over the world, all Masses were cancelled, all gatherings taken away, and before long, the losses from COVID deaths came closer and closer. As we mark a year of this experience, let us acknowledge what a challenging and painful spiritual journey this has been. Not only have more than 20 parishioners died of the disease, countless lives have been changed for more reasons that I can capture here and few that need any explanation. We've been through the ringer.

Many parishioners have told me that this experience has taught them faith is about a lot more than going to Mass on Sunday. **So many individuals in our parish have, to their surprise, found this time to be the biggest period of spiritual growth they have ever experienced.** Their forced fast from the Eucharist made them appreciate Mass more, listening to Podcasts and spiritual content deepened their desire for holiness, joining a small prayer group changed their sense of "Church" forever.

It was 38 weeks ago at the tail-end of June that we once again celebrated Mass in Church for the first time. Getting ready for that was like building a railroad from scratch: we needed a brand-new plan for everything!

Because of the way our pews are spaced, the social distancing rules required us to cut our capacity in half so we could leave every other pew free, and the two seats between households at Mass cut that down further to about 30% tops.



We had to recruit a ton of volunteers to make Mass possible: to sanitize before people arrived, to sign people in, to seat people safely, to sanitize afterwards. We redesigned the way communion was distributed, the way people moved in the church, the way everything worked. Every Mass was a significant undertaking.

It wasn't feasible to pull that off four times every weekend, so we cut the Mass schedule back to two Masses and had to decide how to make sure no one got turned away. We didn't want to institute a reservation system because Jesus taught that *"The last shall be first"* (Matthew 20), and a reservation system, by definition, lets the *first* be first, which troubled us. We also didn't want our volunteer office receptionists to be swamped with reservation calls every week, so we created a system that allowed every parishioner to come to Mass twice a month by inviting people by last names (A-L and M-Z on rotation). Since the usual Catholic regulation to follow

God's 3rd Commandment by attending Mass every weekend was temporarily suspended by the U.S. Catholic Bishops because of the contagiousness of COVID, and because our 9:30 livestream Mass from St. Patrick's is so easy to access, our parishioners handled that with tremendous graciousness. (It's a big part of what makes being your pastor such a joy!)

At Christmas, we knew that a large number of people would want to come to Mass, so to make that possible we created an "overflow" area for the crowd that could not fit in the main church to be able to join in real time and receive communion. We also decided that this was a situation when having people make reservations, despite our misgivings, would be for the greater good. We made a seating chart for each Mass that maximized the use of every pew and make sure that there was some space for out-of-towners and ensured that no one would be turned away. It was a lot of work, but it worked great and everyone, again, was so gracious.

Because Holy Week is the most important week of the year for Catholics, we're going to do that same thing for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Everyone is invited to fill out a reservation form and we will do what we need to in order for everyone to go to Mass.



REQUEST FOR A SPOT AT MASSES ON PALM SUNDAY & EASTER 2021

If you plan to attend for Palm Sunday Mass this year, please circle date below:
SATURDAY, MARCH 27 at 4:30 PM at St. Mary's
SUNDAY, MARCH 28 at 9:30 AM at St. Patrick's

Please indicate your 1st and 2nd choices for Easter Masses this year:
____ SATURDAY, APRIL 3 at 8:00 PM at St. Mary's (Easter Vigil)
____ SUNDAY, APRIL 4 at 7:30 AM at St. Mary's
____ SUNDAY, APRIL 4 at 9:30 AM at St. Patrick's
____ SUNDAY, APRIL 4 at 11:30 AM at St. Patrick's

Name = _____ Number in party = _____

Best contact method = _____

If we need to move to overflow, would you be OK sitting there? YES NO

Please return to the parish in the collection box... or call 518-756-3145 x2...
or e-mail parishbusinessmanager@gmail.com
Thank you!

Now that more people are being vaccinated, we're seeing higher attendance each week, which delights us. It's causing more people to ask when we will return to our regular Mass schedule. You'll be happy to hear that we do indeed plan to return to that schedule as soon as possible, but we can't yet know when that will be for two reasons:

- (1) Because the necessary social distance regulations take time and a LOT of volunteers, we can't return to that schedule until those regulations are relaxed (at least in part).
- (2) The usual weekly "Mass Obligation," the Catholic regulation to follow God's 3rd Commandment, is still temporarily suspended by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, but at some point, it will be reinstated. If we jump the gun on returning to a regular Mass schedule, we will offer people a mixed message on the moral duty to attend Mass. Right now, it is wise to stay home and participate at Mass by watching the livestream. One day, coming "in person to the altar" as a sign of love and faithfulness will again be something all Catholics are asked to do each week. Waiting, so that our reopening coincides with that date, seems to be the most sensible choice as of now.

In the meantime, **we're launching a new Livestream channel on YouTube – this time for St. Mary's 4:30 Mass!** You can [find it here](#), and then please hit  so you'll always be connected. The new railroad we've been building continues to expand... and grace is its cargo!

In faith and with love,

Schedule

SUNDAY 3/21	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT 9:30 = Public Mass at St. Patrick's (for St. Pat's Parishioners A-L) (also St. Patrick's YouTube channel or Mid-Hudson 901)
MONDAY 3/22	By Noon = New Prayer Service for small groups posted on parish Homepages
TUESDAY 3/23	11:00-12:00 = St. Patrick's Women's Prayer Meeting – Classroom 5 2:00 = Rosary, St. Patrick's 5:30 = Confession (St. Patrick's) 6:30 = Rosary, St. Mary's (All are welcome!)
WEDNESDAY 3/24	
THURSDAY 3/25	1:00-2:00 = St. Patrick's Men's Prayer Meeting – Classroom 5
FRIDAY 3/26	8:00 = Morning Prayer (St. Mary's) 6:00 PM = Stations of the Cross (St. Patrick's) (also St. Patrick's YouTube channel or Mid-Hudson 901) 6:00 PM = Stations of the Cross (St. Mary's)
SATURDAY 3/27	4:30 = PALM SUNDAY MASS at St. Mary's
SUNDAY 3/28	9:30 = PALM SUNDAY MASS at St. Patrick's (also St. Patrick's YouTube channel or Mid-Hudson 901)
MONDAY 3/29	By Noon = New Prayer Service for small groups posted on parish Homepages
TUESDAY 3/30	11:00-12:00 = St. Patrick's Women's Prayer Meeting – Classroom 5 2:00 = Rosary (St. Patrick's Church) 5:30 = Confession (St. Mary's) 6:30 = Rosary, St. Mary's (All are welcome)
WEDNESDAY 3/31	6:00 = Holy Thursday Rehearsal (St. Patrick's)
THURSDAY 4/1	HOLY THURSDAY 1:00-2:00 = St. Patrick's Men's Prayer Meeting – Classroom 5 6:00 = Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper (St. Patrick's)
FRIDAY 4/2	GOOD FRIDAY 8:00 = Morning Prayer (St. Mary's) Noon = Stations of the Cross (St. Patrick's) 3:00 PM = Good Friday Service (St. Patrick's) (also St. Patrick's YouTube channel or Mid-Hudson 901) 6:00 PM = Good Friday Service (St. Mary's)

SATURDAY 4/3	<p style="text-align: center;">HOLY SATURDAY</p> <p>11:00 = Easter Vigil Rehearsal (St. Mary's) 8:00 = Easter Vigil at St. Mary's</p>
SUNDAY 4/4	<p style="text-align: center;">EASTER SUNDAY</p> <p>7:30 = Easter Mass at St. Mary's 9:30 = Easter Mass at St. Patrick's (also St. Patrick's YouTube channel or Mid-Hudson 901) 11:30 = Easter Mass at St. Patrick's 6:30 = Eucharistic Adoration (St. Patrick's)</p>

Opportunities For You – To Serve/Pray/Grow

FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS – BOTH PARISHES – FRIDAY, MARCH 26 at 6 PM
GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS – ST. PATRICK'S – APRIL 2 at NOON

Come join us at for the final Stations of the Cross this Lent. We will follow social distancing protocols and may ask for your help with sanitization after the prayers are done.

WOMEN'S TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY – TRY IT TO PREPARE FOR EASTER!

11:00-12:00 Noon on Tuesdays at St. Patrick's in classroom 5 of the school. Open to all!
 Just show up! For more info, please contact the rectory or Christa derobccr@gmail.com

MEN'S THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY – TRY IT TO PREPARE FOR EASTER!

1:00-2:00 PM on Thursdays at St. Patrick's in classroom 5 of the school. Open to all!
 Join us also for the **Rosary 2:00 PM on Tuesdays** in St. Patrick's Church.
 Just show up! For more info, please contact the rectory or Christa derobccr@gmail.com

MORNING PRAYER (Following the LITURGY OF THE HOURS)

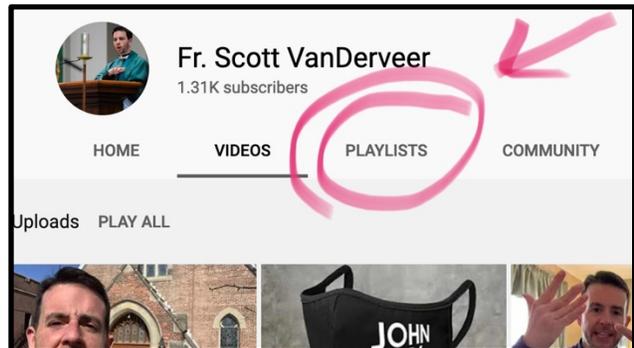
8:00 AM on Fridays at St. Mary's

Fr. Scott's YouTube Channel Update

FR. SCOTT'S VIDEO MESSAGES ARE NOW IN PLAYLISTS BY TOPIC!

Are you one of the 1,315 subscribers to Fr. Scott's YouTube Channel where every week he posts a new message about faith and life? If not, please check it out by [Clicking here](#) and then please hit  .

Once you do that you can go to the **PLAYLISTS tab** and watch messages about topics like prayer, depression, relationships, healing, the Sacraments, Podcast interviews with local parishioners and much, much more.



Help us meet our goal!
[Click here: donation made easy!](#)

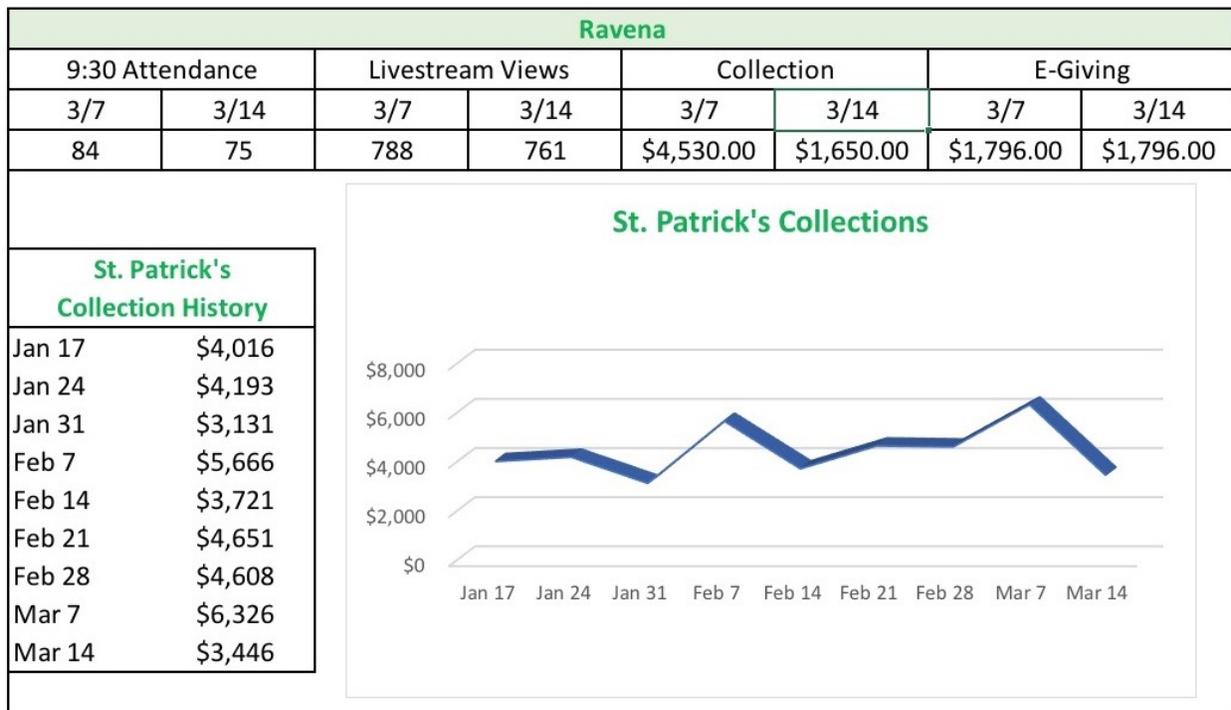
ST. PATRICK'S
155 gifts so far
82% of goal (out of 190 gift goal)
 Base gift = **\$25**
 Highest gift so far = **\$3,000**
 Average gift = **\$316**
 Total donations to date = * **\$48,174**

* 🌟 **103% of dollar goal** 🌟

ST. MARY'S
148 gifts so far
85% of goal (out of 175 gift goal)
 Base gift = **\$25**
 Highest gift so far = **\$2,000**
 Average gift = **\$282**
 Total donations to date = * **\$40,894**

* **91% of dollar goal**

Collections & E-Giving E-Mail Dawn Brownson | parishbusinessmanager@gmail.com



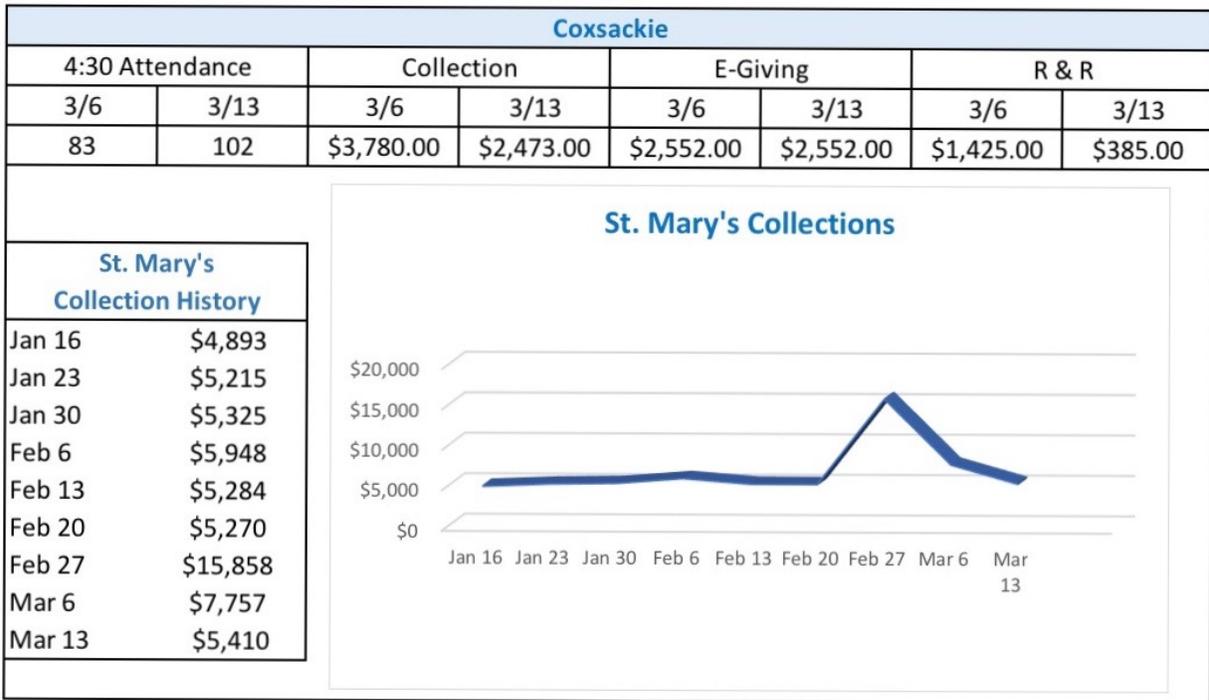
ENVELOPES, CHECKS & CASH GIFTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME, BUT E-GIVING DOES WORK BEST
 Might you like to give e-giving a try, knowing how much it helps the parish budget for the future and be assured of support, regardless of the weather, COVID restrictions or other unforeseen challenges? If so, [Click Here](#). Know that you can give it a try and later change your mind at any time.



10% DONATION BRINGS ST. MARY'S "R & R FUND" UP TO NEARLY REGULAR LEVELS

This week Kate & Joe Konopka, the owners of Red's, sent St. Mary's a check of \$520 for our Repairs & Renovations Fund thanks to their once-a-month 10% giveaway! Since we first let you know about our R&R Fund shortfall, you have responded with tremendous generosity! One parishioner anonymously donated \$12K to the fund and more than \$6,000 in other parishioner donations on top of that have brought our fund to \$29,544, just \$2,704 below budget for this time of year. This weekend, March 20-21 is our monthly R&R collections, so perhaps by this very week we will have overcome our deficit, thanks to each and every parishioner who has given to us. We can't thank you enough!

Thank you all for your incredible generosity!



Food Pantry at St. Patrick's **Diane Hoffman | 518-330-6789**

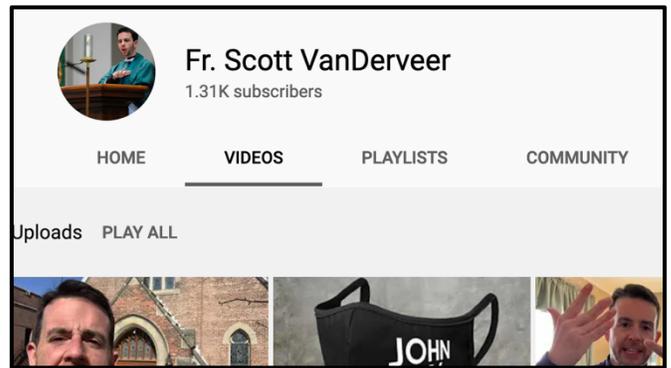
We are proud of Director Diane Hoffman for being the Ravena New-Herald's "Community Star of the Month!" Thank you, Diane – and thank you to all on the team with her!

Faith Formation Update for St. Mary's **Call Bob Desrosiers | 518-444-8184**

High schoolers in Faith Formation are now using Fr. Scott's YouTube channel to access messages and homilies that connect to the topics they are exploring in the Faith Formation sessions. The feedback so far has been excellent.

For those who are participating:
What do you like about this year's new format?
What would you like to see tweaked?
Your opinion matters! We're eager to hear!

Please contact Bob with feedback.



Connecting with the Parishes

Online | Phone | E-Mail

WEEKEND MASSES:

4:30 PM Saturday at St. Mary's (by weekly invitation)

9:30 AM Sunday at St. Patrick's (by weekly invitation)

9:30 AM on **St. Patrick's YouTube** channel (also on-demand)

[Click here](#) and then please subscribe

and on **Mid-Hudson Cable channel 901** (live at 9:30 only)

FR. SCOTT'S HOMILIES AND VIDEO MESSAGES (New postings multiple times each week):

[Click here](#) and then please hit 

WEEKDAY MASS (On Facebook Live from Our Lady of Victory Parish, Troy)

[Click here](#) to watch live at 8:30 AM Monday – Friday or on demand later in the day

PROFILES OF ENDURANCE (Fr. Scott's Podcast)

Interviews with parishioners about facing life's challenges

**SUBSCRIBE TODAY
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OR ON SPOTIFY**



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MY PARISH APP (Two Parishes, One App):

Text **APP** to **88202** to subscribe

INSTAGRAM (Two Parishes, One Instagram):

[stmary's.stpatrick's](https://www.instagram.com/stmary's.stpatrick's)



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

First Sunday of the month 6:30-7:30 PM at St. Patrick's

MORNING PRAYER (Following the LITURGY OF THE HOURS)

Friday mornings at 8:00 at St. Mary's

WOMEN'S TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

1:00-2:00 PM on Tuesdays at St. Patrick's in classroom 5 of the school

MEN'S THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY

1:00-2:00 PM on Thursdays at St. Patrick's in classroom 5 of the school