When we talk about the sacraments, we almost always talk about celebration. We celebrate Mass. Baptisms and confirmations, weddings and ordinations are causes for celebration. But I have never come across any reference to celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation outside of a theology textbook or religion class. We neither talk nor think that way. We may go to the sacrament, but we don't celebrate it. It is not hard to understand why. No one considers their sins a cause for celebration. That might be why some of us find it hard to build a place for the Sacrament of Reconciliation into our spiritual lives. We approach the sacrament as if it were about our sins. We don’t approach it as a celebration of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

Many of us would find it easier to remember the Sacrament of Reconciliation is about God's mercy, and many of us would be happy to celebrate God’s forgiveness in sacramental form, if only it didn’t involve revealing the murky mess of our sins. Much of the time, our sins seem painfully trivial and embarrassingly repetitious when put into words. Couldn’t we just create a form of the sacrament in which a penitent simply says, “I am a sinner,” and the priest responds, “Go in peace, God forgives you?” Wouldn’t the effect be the same?

The effect of a sacramental form that left out any reference to specific sins might be the same where confirming God’s mercy is concerned, but when it comes to allowing God’s forgiveness to have a liberating effect in our lives, it might not. We find a hint as to why in the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola. He suggests that retreatants should keep the director informed of all the agitations and thoughts that are stirred up in them.

Confessing my sins to a priest is hard enough. Confessing my temptations and agitations and stray thoughts to a spiritual director, well, that just seems disturbingly intrusive. Maybe not, though. Ignatius explains his suggestion in a story about a woman who tells her husband that she is receiving unwanted attention from another man. The point of the story is this: What is hidden takes on a psychological proportion and spiritual power in our lives that makes us prisoners of the secret. However, once we express something, we neutralize its power and we are given a freedom to move on that we did not have when we kept the secret to ourselves.

God always forgives us, but God’s mercy will have a hard time freeing us to go forward unless we let God’s forgiveness move us to express not just the disturbingly harmful things we sometimes do, but also the banal, habitual things that we so frequently do and find so hard not to do. Putting our sins into words for the Church’s minister and hearing the Church’s minister confirm God’s forgiveness of them can be a significant step along the path of liberation. It takes what we keep hidden and brings it out into the open. This neutralizes its power, and starts us on the way of freedom.

People have various opinions about Pope Francis. One thing everyone can agree on, though, is that he is a supremely free person. Maybe the source of his freedom is his attitude toward sin and forgiveness. In response to an interviewer’s question “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?” he answered, “I do not know what might be the most fitting description…. I am a sinner.” Then he immediately added, “This is the most accurate definition. It’s not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner.” This man who is honest about his sins most likely is a man who celebrates the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently and finds the sacrament a cause for celebration not just because it confirms God’s mercy but because it allows God's mercy to set him on the road to freedom.

In Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis writes, “How good it feels to come back when we are lost. God never tires of forgiving, but we tire of seeking mercy.” Tomorrow afternoon and evening, every parish of the Archdiocese of New York is offering a special opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This might be a good time to seek God’s mercy, celebrate the sacrament, and let the celebration set us on the road to freedom.

- Rev. Thomas H. Feely, S.J.
Associate Pastor

For more information on Reconciliation Monday, please see page 2.
THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th
Third Sunday of Advent
Pre-Natal Blessing at all Masses this weekend. See details at right.
Final week of the Advent Food Drive. Details on page 3.
Wallace Hall Christmas Pageant. Following the 11:00 AM Family Mass All are welcome!
Christmas Caroling. 1:30 PM. Hosted by Boomers & Beyond and Ignatian 40s. Details on page 3.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th, 3:00 PM & WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18th, 7:00 PM
Sacred Music in a Sacred Space presents A Child is Born — Annual Christmas Concerts Details on page 5.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16th
Reconciliation Monday
Parishes throughout the Archdiocese of New York will be offering the Sacrament of Confession. Confessions will be heard from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM. This will be followed by our PARISH ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE at 7:00 PM Many priests will be available for Confession.
Monday, December 16th is the deadline for the SVDP Annual Toy Drive. Details on page 3.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18th
Daily Masses at 8:30 AM, 12:10 PM, and 5:30 PM: Time for Reflection
The Daily Mass on the Wednesdays of Advent will offer a few moments to reflect quietly upon the readings of the day (in lieu of a homily). Enjoy a few moments of quiet time during the busy Advent season.
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Meeting. 7:00 PM. Conference Room. All are welcome.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20th to SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22nd
Shelter Weekend
Shelter Volunteers Needed!
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Women’s Shelter needs set-up and stay-over volunteers every other weekend through April. Both men and women are invited to assist. To volunteer, please leave a message for Teresa Abruzzo at the Parish House or email svdp.shelter980@gmail.com

THE WEEKEND: PRE-NATAL BLESSING
A special Pre-Natal Blessing will be offered to expectant families at all Masses this weekend. As we draw near to the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child, we encourage those families about to experience the miracle of birth or adoption to join us for this special blessing.

SAVE THE DATE!
LAY MINISTERS’ ENRICHMENT PROGRAM
Saturday, January 25th
All Lay Ministers at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola are invited to attend. Details to follow...

Advent/Christmas Prayer Booklet
Based on the writings of the late Bishop Kenneth Untener, this booklet offers daily reflections throughout the Advent/Christmas season. Available at the Parish House while supplies last. Cost: $1
ANNUAL TOY DRIVE ENDS TOMORROW!
SVdP is sponsoring a toy drive to benefit the children of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish on Staten Island.

Please bring new, unwrapped toys or games to the Parish House.

ENDEAVOUR FOOD DRIVE
Many New Yorkers depend upon food pantries to ensure that their families will not go hungry.

Throughout the first three weeks of Advent, SVdP will be accepting donations of food for the Community Food Pantry at the Church of St. Gregory the Great.

Donations can be brought to the Narthex on Sundays or to the Parish House during the week.

Thank you for remembering those in need.

BOOMERS & BEYOND IGNATIAN 40s
TODAY AT 1:30 PM
Double the voices, double the fun!
Calling all Boomers & Beyonders and Ignatian 40s for our annual Christmas Caroling event at the Lott Assisted Living Residence.

You don’t have to be a super soprano or terrific tenor, just someone who wants to join with us in sharing some Christmas joy through song and perhaps stop at a local spot for a snack and drink afterwards.

Place: Lott Assisted Living Residence — 5th Avenue (between 107th and 108th Streets)

IGNATIAN YOUNG ADULTS
Sunday Social Dates
The Sunday Socials are held in Wallace Hall at 8:30 PM, following the 7:30 PM Mass. They are hosted by the Ignatian Young Adults. All young adults (ages 21-39) are welcome. To receive updates on IYA events and other opportunities, you can follow us on Facebook at “Ignatian Young Adults (NYC).”

* See page 5 for details about the IYA’s Annual Cookie Exchange taking place before tonight’s Social.

IYA Knitting Group
All IYAs are welcome to join us as we craft for charity. If you have questions or would like to be placed on the mailing list, contact Amy at amybalbierz@gmail.com

IYA Women of Faith
What role does faith play in your life?
The IYA Faith & Spirituality committee is looking for women in their 20s & 30s to participate in a women’s fellowship group that would meet once a month.

This group will focus on finding the balance between work and faith and how to center yourself by using Ignatian spiritual exercises.

If interested, please send an email by December 29th to FaithIYA@gmail.com

A Thank You from The Philippine Jesuit Foundation
Dear Friends,

On behalf of Fr. Provincial Tony Moreno, thank you for your generous contribution to the Philippine Jesuit Foundation (PJF), earmarked for the Yolanda Calamity Fund.

We are touched by your compassion and prayers for our suffering Filipino brothers and sisters. Our Lord, we are sure, will not be outdone in generosity.

Your donation of $5,962 of December 3, 2013 will go a long way to rebuild the lives of the victims of Yolanda.

Assurance of prayers for all of you at St. Ignatius!

Bless you and kindest regards,

Victor R. Salanga, S.J.
PJF Coordinator
MUSIC AT MASSES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22nd
Fourth Sunday of Advent
11:00 AM SOLEMN MASS
Brahms  Es ist ein Ros’ entsprungen
Demessieux  Rorate coeli
Guerrero  Rorate coeli
Parsons  Ave Maria

7:30 PM MASS
Brahms  Es ist ein Ros’ entsprungen
Demessieux  Rorate coeli
Smith  There is no rose

Copies of the Christmas and Holiday Mass Schedule, which includes the listing of music being sung at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses, are available in the Narthex, the Parish House, and at stignatiusloyola.org

Please support the Advent and Christmas Liturgical Music Fund
This fund supports the liturgical music program throughout the year — our musicians, staff, music, robes, and maintenance of instruments.

Gifts of $100 or more that are received by Tuesday, December 17th, will be listed in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship aids. Contributions of $500 or more will be featured in a separate section.
Visit https://donate.stignatiusloyola.org/liturgicalmusic to donate

Ignatian Solidarity Network invites you to join members of the Ignatian network for an 8-day journey to El Salvador from July 24 to August 1, 2014 to commemorate the lives of the Jesuit martyrs.

The program will provide participants with a framework for exploring the historical elements of the martyrs’ lives while engaging very personally in the modern issues of social justice that our brothers and sisters face in El Salvador.

Learn more about this exciting opportunity online at http://bit.ly/13w9bpT or email Chris Kerr at ckerr@ignatiansolidarity.net

ATTENTION LECTORS:
Copies of the new Workbook for Lectors, Year A, 2014, are available for $10 at the Parish House reception desk.

We pray for the faithful departed
Laura Cerutti
Shauna Gallagher
May they rest in the peace of the Risen Lord.

Announced Masses and Readings for the Week

Monday, December 16th
(3rd Monday of Advent)
8:30 MEM  Angelo Schiavetta
12:10 MEM  Jack O’Leary
5:30 MEM  Mamie Vitarelli

Tuesday, December 17th
(3rd Tuesday of Advent)
Genesis 49:2, 8–10  Psalm 72  Matthew 1:1–17
8:30 MEM  Jerry Johnson
12:10 MEM  Intention of the Donor
5:30 MEM  Lydia Gaurilescu

Wednesday, December 18th
(3rd Wednesday of Advent)
Jeremiah 23:5-8  Psalm 72  Matthew 1:18–25
8:30 MEM  John Graziani
12:10 MEM  August Joel Ihiefeld
5:30 MEM  Sose & Mark Prekelezaj

Thursday, December 19th
(3rd Thursday of Advent)
8:30 MEM  William Fazzalaro
12:10 MEM  Columbus Bowden
5:30 MEM  Living & Deceased Members of the Wallace Family

Friday, December 20th
(3rd Friday of Advent)
8:30 MEM  Rose Bernabee
12:10 MEM  August Joel Ihiefeld
5:30 MEM  Nathan Davidson

Saturday, December 21st
(3rd Saturday of Advent)
Song of Songs 2:8–14  Psalm 33  Luke 1:39–45
8:30 LVG  The Intentions of the Coffey Family

Sunday, December 22nd
(4th Sunday of Advent)
Isaiah 7:10–14  Psalm 24
Romans 1:1–7  Matthew 1:18–24

New Parishioners: We welcome new parishioners and invite you to fill out a Parishioner Registration Card located in the pew racks, at the Parish House, and online at stignatiusloyola.org

Interested in becoming Catholic? Call 212-288-3588 or email church@stignatiusloyola.org
Have you made your donation to the Annual Appeal?

Our goal is $600,000 and at present the total stands at $230,730. We are deeply grateful for the donations that have come in and for those that continue to arrive daily.

If you have not yet made a contribution and are considering your year-end charitable giving, we encourage you to include the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola.

Thank you and God bless you!

WALLACE HALL
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

TODAY
immediately following the 11:00 AM Family Mass
All are welcome as the children tell the story of our Lord’s birth!

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR DONATION TO THE ANNUAL APPEAL?

3rd ANNUAL PARISH CHRISTMAS COOKIE EXCHANGE
hosted by the Ignatian Young Adults at the IYA Sunday Social

TONIGHT
8:30 PM in Wallace Hall

All parishioners are welcome.

Bring your homemade cookies to swap with others!

To participate:

BAKE your favorite Christmas cookies. (If you’re not a baker, you may bring high quality holiday-themed cookies from a bakery.)

We recommend bringing 2 dozen (24) cookies, but any amount is fine as long as you take that many home!

BRING your treats to Wallace Hall on before or after tonight’s 7:30 PM Mass.

Make sure to bring your treats in a container you can also use for carrying your new cookies home.

EXCHANGE your cookies. Count how many cookies you brought and collect the same number of cookies from the table to take home.

All are welcome to stay for our Christmas Social, also in Wallace Hall!

Please note that if you bring cookies, you must also take cookies home. If you are interested in donating baked goods for the Christmas Social or have any questions about the event, please contact Colleen at colleen.murrett@gmail.com

HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Tuesday, December 24th
Christmas Eve
• 4:00 PM Family Mass I  • 6:00 PM Family Mass II
• 8:00 PM Mass of Christmas  • Midnight Mass

Wednesday, December 25th
Christmas Day  • 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM

If you are available, please email liturgicalministers@stignatiusloyola.org to let us know at which Mass you can assist.

WALLACE HALL
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

TODAY
immediately following the 11:00 AM Family Mass
All are welcome as the children tell the story of our Lord’s birth!

Have you made your donation to the Annual Appeal?

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Thank you and God bless you!

THIS WEEK AT SACRED MUSIC IN A SACRED SPACE

A Child is Born — Annual Christmas Concerts
Today at 3:00 PM (Sold out) & Wednesday, December 18th at 7:00 PM
Choir & Orchestra of St. Ignatius Loyola Parish Community Choir & Children's Choirs
K. Scott Warren, Maureen Haley, Robert Reuter & Michael Sheetz, conductors
Nancianne Parrella, organ
Ann Wazelle, soprano; Kate Maroney, mezzo soprano; Philip Anderson, tenor

Tickets:
$75 preferred, $60 general, $50 reduced
Opening with Ralph Vaughan Williams’ beloved Fantasia on Greensleeves, and culminating with favorites from the Christmas portion of Handel’s Messiah, our Christmas concerts will inspire you and your family during the height of New York City’s dazzling holiday season.

Tickets can be purchased online at smssconcerts.org or by calling 212-288-2520.
What Are You Waiting For? An Advent lunch and prayer experience for women ages 18-35 years old. Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of New York. Sunday, December 15th, 1:00 PM. Formore information, contact Joyce Pellegrino, S.C. at jmpellegrino@scny.org or call 718-543-5131.

New York Encounter: The Time of the Person. The Origins of a People. Friday, January 17th – Sunday, January 19th, 2014. Manhattan Center, 311 West 34th Street at 8th Avenue. A three-day cultural festival that will explore the intersection of faith and the public sphere of life through presentations, artistic performances, conferences, and exhibits. All events are open to the public, most events are free. For more information, visit newyorkencounter.org or call (646) 571-2341.

Men’s Weekend Retreat, Thursday, January 23rd – Sunday, January 26th, 2014. Loyola House of Retreats, Morristown, NJ. Directed by Fr. Thomas R. Marciniak, S.J., Fordham University. The retreat will begin Thursday night following 7:00 PM dinner. Cost: $400 free will offering. To RSVP, call 973-539-0740 and reference the group name “St. Ignatius New York – Men’s.” For additional information, contact Peter Riordan at 212-877-5134 or visit loyola.org.


PARISH STAFF

Pastor
Rev. George M. Witt, S.J.

Associate Pastors
Rev. William J. Bergen, S.J.
Rev. Thomas H. Feely, S.J.
Rev. Ugo R. Nacciarone, S.J.

Pastoral Associates
Joanne Cunneen
Kathryn King, F.S.P.

Assisting Priests (Sunday)
Rev. Philip G. Judge, S.J.
Rev. James Martin, S.J.
Rev. Anthony P. Sool-Hoo, S.J.

Music Ministries
Scott Warren, Director
Nancianne Parrella
Robert Reuter
Michael Sheetz
Maureen Haley
Philip Anderson
Sara Murphy, Administrator
Staff information: on the website at music/music staff

Assistant to the Pastor
Diane M. Boyle

Administrative Assistant
Patricia Schneider

Communications Coordinator
Elizabeth O’Sullivan

Director of Facilities
Czeslaw “Chester” Ciupinski

Asst. to the Director of Facilities
Caroline Fernandes

Treasurer
Fernando Castro

Religious Education for Children
Joanne Cunneen, M.A., M.S.
Director
(212) 861-4764

St. Ignatius Loyola Grammar School
Ms. Mary Larkin, Principal
M.S. Ed. (Admin.), M.S. Ed. (Literacy)
48 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028
(212) 861-3820 Fax: (212) 879-8248

St. Ignatius Loyola Day Nursery
Ms. Theodora Crist, M.S.
Executive Director
240 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028
(212) 734-6427 Fax: (212) 734-6972

Children’s Liturgy of the Word:
Sundays at the 9:30 AM Mass and the 11:00 AM Mass in Wallace Hall.

Centering Prayer:
Mondays at 6:30 PM

Confessions:
5:00 PM Saturday or by appointment.
Confessions will be heard at St. Ignatius Loyola Church during the Archdiocesan Day of Reconciliation on Monday, December 16th, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM.
This will be followed by our Parish Advent Reconciliation Service at 7:00 PM.

Baptisms:
Contact Maureen Fullam, M.A., Director, at the Parish House.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults:
The Bride or Groom should call Joanne Cunneen at the Parish House to arrange for a Baptism and the preparation given prior to Baptism.

Marriages:
The Bride or Groom should call Joanne Cunneen at the Parish House to begin preparation for Marriage, normally one year in advance.

Visits to the Sick:
Please contact the Parish House between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM.

Music Information: (212) 288-2520 Email: music@stignatiusloyola.org