

Our Lady of Victories Church

(serving Harrington Park, River Vale and the Pascack/Northern Valley)

150 Harriot Avenue, Harrington Park, New Jersey

www.ourchurch.com/member/o/olvparish

Rev. Bryan F.J. Adamcik SFO, KHS Pastor

Rev. Duverney Bermudez

Rev. Christopher M. Ciccarino KHS

Rev. Brian Muzás

Weekend Assistants

Br. Innocent CFR

Charles Niece

Parish Seminararians

Mr. Thomas Lagatol Mr. Albert McLaughlin

Deacons

Susan Evanella Betty Ann Niece

Religious Education

Selena Piazza

Lesa Rossmann

Ministers of Music

Curtiss & Katie Stella

High School Ministry

Jorden Pedersen Esq.

President Parish Council

Rev. Anthony Mastroeni

Rev. John O'Connor

Latin Mass Assistants

Sr. Mary Corrigan, SC

Sr. Elizabeth Holler, SC

In Residence-Convent

Deacon Al McLaughlin

Parish Catechetical Leader

Elizabeth Ulisse

Martin Coyne II

Parish Trustees

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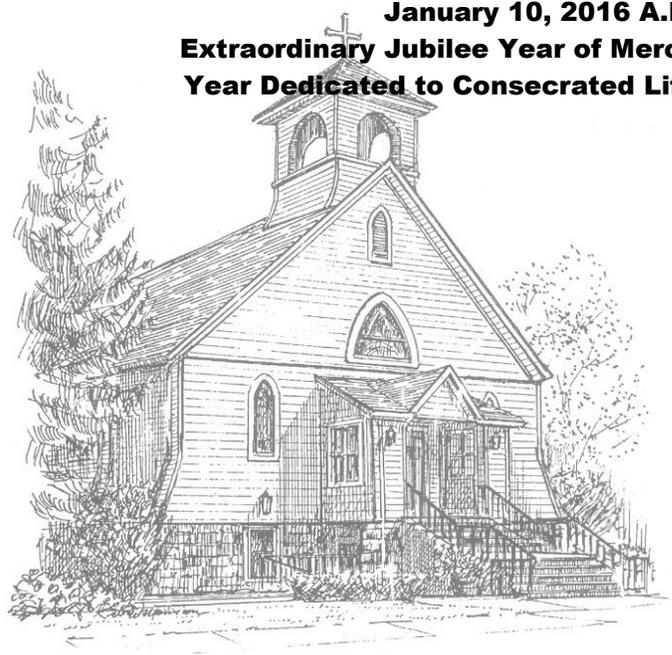
Jon Fischer CFA

Chairman Finance Committee

January 10, 2016 A.D.

Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy

Year Dedicated to Consecrated Life



WELCOME

**To the Parish Family of
OUR LADY OF VICTORIES
(THE LITTLE CHURCH WITH THE BIG HEART)**

COME WORSHIP WITH US

Mass Schedule

Saturday: 4:00pm & 5:00pm

**Sunday: 7:30am, 9:30am, 10:45am,
12:00pm, 6:00pm & 7:00pm**

Latin Mass: Every Sunday at 8:15am

Weekdays: M-Sat 8:00am & 12:00noon

PARISH MEMBERSHIP:

All are welcome to become members of OLV Parish because we're the **little Church with the BIG HEART**. Please register in the Rectory. Every Catholic family or individuals living within the parish boundaries are encouraged to register.

SPECIAL MASSES OR DEVOTIONS:

First Friday: 7:30pm, Mass of Sacred Heart & Devotions

First Saturday: 8:00am, Mass of Immaculate Heart of Mary

First Saturday: 12:00pm Mass for Souls in Purgatory

Novenas prayed after 8:00 a.m. Mass:

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal: Monday

St. Jude and St. Anthony: Wednesday

Infant of Prague: 25th of the month

Rosary: Recited M - Sat after 8:00am & 12Noon Mass.

Tuesday-Novena Prayer and Adoration: 2:00-3:00pm

Thursday-Holy Hour with Adoration & Benediction: 7:00pm

Friday-Exposition & Adoration: 12:30PM-3:00pm

Nocturnal Adoration: First Friday evening 8pm to Saturday 8am

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/CONFESSION:

Monday - Friday 7:30am - 7:50am. First Friday at 7:00pm

Saturday at 11:00a.m.-Noon; 3:00pm - 3:25pm

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:

To register for Baptismal preparation and Baptism, call the rectory.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION:

Call the Religious Ed Office for requirements/class schedule.

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY:

Please call the rectory for an appointment.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK/LAST RITES:

Sick calls at any time in emergency.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS AND VOCATIONS:

Anyone contemplating a vocation to the Priesthood or Religious Life should contact the Vocations Office at 973.497.4365.

Phone: OLV Rectory
201-768-1706
Email: olvrectory.hp@gmail.com

OLV Fax
201-768-3962

Religious Education
201-768-1400
olvhpccd@gmail.com

OLV Convent
201-768-1705

PRAY FOR OUR SICK

Please **PRAY** in the name of **JESUS**, the Healer, that the **SICK** of **OLV PARISH** may be restored to health and all those who **ASSIST** and **CARE** for the sick will be given the **STRENGTH** to continue **GOD'S GOOD WILL**: Baby Luca, little Niamh Devlin, Br. Pius, Isabella Ruggiero, Maria Aleman, Nicholas Biancola Jr, Kathleen Dolan, Thomas Haring, Arnold Kemner, Ken Mosier, Kathleen Musante, Dan Ragusa, Suzanne Rothschild, Wendy Ruggiero, Cookie Rush, Cynthia Simonelli, Mildred Speck, Therese Vaglio, Darien Wesler, Al Wiese, Roy Wurtz, Marian Zanetti, Elaine Zito.

SPIRITUAL EXCERPT

"THE EYES OF GOD"

"You have got to learn to look at events, at everything that happens, through the eyes of God and not your own selfishness. What is it in your life and in my life that smothers the real truth? What is covering it over? Is it riches? Is it a desire for human glory? Is it lust? Is it alcohol? Is it sex? Pride? What is it that covers up the glory of the kingdom and makes us desire the very least? Why are we willing to spend eternity in a mud shack, when we could have a spiritual mansion?"

Mother Angelica, Little Book of Life Lessons page 41

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios being the same, it would look something like the following: There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere (both North & South), and 8 Africans. There would be 52 females and 48 males. There would be 30 whites and 70 non-whites. There would be 70 non-Christians and only 30 Christians. 6 individuals would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth, and all 6 would be from the United States. 80 of the individuals would live in substandard housing. 70 individuals would be unable to read. 50 would suffer from malnutrition. One would be near death, and another would be near birth. ONLY one individual would have a college education and one would own a computer. When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for acceptance, understanding and education becomes glaringly apparent.

HEAPS OF HEALING HUMOR

I was inspired by a woman in her fourth stage of ovarian cancer. Even her doctors were amazed at how well she was doing. Her secret? Laughter. "My sense of humor helps me find a lighter side of things, even on tough days," she told me. What do we need to survive life's heartaches? Heaps of healing humor. Healing humor reduces stress, elevates moods, boosts the immune system and fosters relaxation. It helps us overlook the ugly, tolerate the unpleasant, cope with surprises, and smile through the unbearable. Humor is a shock absorber, minimizing the pain troubles can bring. Today's people seem to be serious about everything. Some go through life with their finger on the panic button, crossing bridges before they get to them, certain trouble is just around the corner. The prescription for those suffering from humor-deficiency: an injection of laughter. People with positive outlooks laugh often to relieve themselves of life's tears. A good belly laugh stirs the blood, expands the chest, and clears the cobwebs from the brain. Laughter is a gift we need to survive. If it's missing, put it back! Remember: Laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry and all you get is wet!

F Y I

While "Cleaning of the Stones" at the National Cemetery in Holly I noticed a quarter placed on one of the stones. Later I also noticed a nickel placed on another stone, I was so touched with this that I took pictures. (sorry the nickel did not turn out) I googled about the coins, and found this out. I am very proud to share this.

A coin left on a headstone lets the deceased soldier's family know that somebody stopped by to pay their respect. Leaving a penny means you visited. A nickel means that you and the deceased soldier trained at boot camp together. If you served with the soldier, you leave a dime. A quarter is very significant because it means that you were there when that soldier died.

THANK YOU

A special word of thanks goes out to all those who sent Christmas cards and plants, candies, baked goods, fruit baskets and other treats and for all the other ways you remembered me and the Rectory Staff during the Christmas Holy Days. Fr. Bryan

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Baptism of Our Lord. This brings to an end the season of Christmas. The Church recalls Our Lord's second manifestation or epiphany which occurred on the occasion of His baptism in the Jordan. Jesus descended into the River to sanctify its waters and to give them the power to beget sons of God. The event takes on the importance of a second creation in which the entire Trinity intervenes.

Through the centuries, artists and craftspeople have depicted Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River by John. At first in mosaics and frescoes, and later in tapestries, stained glass, and paintings, the scene is familiar. Jesus is standing waist-high in flowing water. Above him, standing on dry land, John the Baptist pours water over Jesus. The first artists to depict this were sketching from memory. This is exactly how most people were baptized in the early days: as adults, standing or kneeling in the water, with water poured over their heads. This method of baptizing, called immersion, is the favored way today. An adult enters a font, or an infant is lowered a bit into the water supported by a parent's hand, and water is poured or splashed over them. The treasures of baptistry art attest that submersion, or plunging beneath the water's surface, is not really in our tradition, and that "infusion," the mere pouring of a few drops of water, yields too narrow an understanding of what it means to be plunged into Christ's life. Jesus Christ has gone before us into the water, and waits for us there with abundant gifts. No wonder the tradition calls for abundant symbols!

The symbols and actions of baptism evolved around the experience of adults dying to old patterns of life and rising from the waters of baptism as new creations. As for newborn babies, at first it was desired to wait until the following Easter, when they could be baptized, anointed with chrism, and given a taste of the Eucharist in association with adults. The Church was always willing to baptize adults in emergency situations outside the Easter timetable, and in time, since infancy itself was a life-threatening situation, the baptism of babies became commonplace. As with the "emergency" adult baptisms, it was required that parents bring the child, as soon as health was recovered, to the bishop for the full menu of sacraments. The very real fear of death for infants thus created a situation in which the three sacraments drifted apart from each other, and away from their original, adult celebration at Easter. Today, at last, we know a great deal about how our practices evolved. This knowledge is reshaping how we celebrate Easter, how we receive adult faith, and how we structure the faith journey of children.

Jesus asked one thing from us!!!

On His last night of earth (Holy Thursday) Jesus asked His disciples one thing – to stay awake with Him for one hour. Every Thursday evening we at OLV try to fulfill this request by having a Holy Hour from 7-8PM. Join us in carrying out Jesus' request.

Women's Dance Class—ZUMBA

The women's Zumba exercise classes are held on Mondays 6:00PM in the gym and Thursdays 7:15PM in the Parish Center.

Give before you are asked to.

Upcoming OLV Parish Events

- Jan 10/11—Sun/Mon – CCD
- Jan 11—Mon—Zumba 6:00PM
- Jan 12 -Tue – Marian Novena Prayer 2:15-3:15PM
- Jan 13—Wed—Bible Study 10:00AM
- Jan 13—Wed—OLV Needlers
- Jan 15—Fri– Adoration from 12:30PM-4:00PM
- Jan 16 - Sat—Confessions 11:00-12:00noon 3:00-3:25PM
- Jan 17– Sat—First Confessions
- Jan 23—Sat—K of C Beef Steak
- May 14—Sat- FIRST HOLY COMMUNION
- May 22—Sun—Confirmation 2PM
- May 30—Mon—Fr. Innocent CFR First Mass & Reception at OLV-1PM

DEFEAT GLOBAL TERRORISM

How do you defeat a global terrorist organization like ISIS, whose members are largely hidden throughout the world, and are willing to die in suicide bombings for their diabolical goals of worldwide mass murder and destruction? The ultimate answer is through prayer. The battle against ISIS is, at its roots, a spiritual battle against the Devil and the forces of darkness.

We believe Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Spiritual Mother of all peoples, has been given the power by God to crush the head of Satan (cf. Gen 3:15) and to successfully lead the spiritual battle against the great Dragon (cf. Rev. 12). Historically, Our Lady has repeatedly interceded for victories against foreign invasion seeking to destroy Christianity and Judeo-Christian civilization (e.g., Lepanto, 1571; Vienna, 1683).

Join the spiritual battle to stop ISIS. Please pray the Rosary every day, and include in your Rosary the intention "for the defeat of ISIS and for the conversion of its members."

Recently, Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Nigeria was praying before the Blessed Sacrament and asking Our Lord how to combat the horrific terrorist attacks of ISIS affiliate, Boko Haram upon the people of his diocese. Suddenly, Jesus appeared to the bishop with a sword in his hand. When Jesus handed the sword to the bishop, it turned into a Rosary. Jesus repeated three times: "Boko Haram gone." This confirms that it is heaven's directive that we battle and defeat ISIS through the power of the Rosary.

In this worldwide expression of prayer and unity, please add your name as a sign of your commitment to pray the Rosary daily to defeat ISIS. Let us entrust the spiritual defeat of ISIS to the most powerful intercession of Mary, the Spiritual Mother of all peoples and the Mediatrix of all graces.

Endorsements

- Telesphore Cardinal Toppo, Cardinal Archbishop of Ranchi, India
- Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, Archbishop Emeritus of Cebu, Philippines
- Archbishop John Njenga, Archbishop Emeritus of Mombassa, Kenya
- Bishop Josef Maria Punt, Bishop of Haarlem-Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme, Bishop of Maiduguri, Nigeria
- Dr. Mark Miravalle, Professor of Theology, Franciscan University - Steubenville
- Immaculée Ilibagiza, Worldwide Missionary for the Rosary and Forgiveness
- Drew Mariani, Relevant Radio National Talk Show Host

TRAVELING STATUE

OLV has a traveling statue of the Blessed Mother that can go from home to home so that prayers and rosaries can be said for the good of the people of the parish and the individual family. The statue will "visit" for a week before it will be sent to the next home. Contact the rectory for information or to have your name placed on the list to receive the statue.

VOCATIONS

Mary and Joseph raised their child in a family of love and faith. They directed Jesus to follow God's will for His life. Each of us must assist and allow our children to follow God's will in their lives. This is true even if God calls your child to serve Him as a Priest, or Religious Sister or Brother. For information see Fr. Bryan or call the Vocations office at 973-497-4365.

3:00PM ROSARY

On Sundays at 3:00PM parishioners have organized and will be reciting the rosary. All are welcome.

PRAY for THOSE in the MILITARY

- Lieutenant Julia H. Cheringal, US Navy;
- Lieutenant Ben Clemente, US Army;
- Midshipman Jon Clemente, US Navy;
- Sergeant Nicholas Colletti, US Army;
- 1st Lieutenant Ryan Colomeo, U.S. Marine Corps;
- Captain Michael Franson, US Army;
- Sergeant First Class Charles Greene, US Army;
- Lieutenant Tara Harris, US Air Force;
- Lieutenant Joseph Jaeger, US Navy;
- Lieutenant Andrew Jaeger, US Navy;
- Chief Master Sergeant Shawn Llewellyn, US Air Force;
- Captain Shawn Linn, US Army;
- Colonel John McLaughlin, US Army;
- Corporal Richard McKenna, USMC.

PRAYER FOR OUR MILITARY

O Prince of peace, we humbly ask Your protection for all our men and women in military service. Give them unflinching courage to defend with honor, dignity and devotion, the rights of all who are imperiled by injustice and evil. Be their rock, their shield, and their stronghold and let them draw their strength from You. For You are God, for ever and ever.

RESPECT LIFE

As we give thanks for the gift of life, consider the words of Pope John Paul II: "Causing death can never be considered a form of medical treatment. Rather, it runs completely counter to the health-care profession, which is meant to be an impassioned and unflinching affirmation of life."

- *Gospel of Life*

THE CHURCH & CREMATION

Are Roman Catholics allowed to be cremated? YES. In May 1963, the Vatican's Holy Office lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics in the U.S. to choose cremation. This permission was incorporated into the Code of Canon Law of 1983, as well as into the Order of Christian Funerals.

SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!!

It is through the generosity of our advertisers that we are able to place this bulletin into your hands without cost to the Parish. Why not get into the habit of looking through the ads and give these neighbors/merchants a chance to serve your needs. Tell them you read about them in the OLV Parish Bulletin.

CCD Corner

On behalf of the staff and students of our CCD Program, we would like to wish you and your families a blessed and healthy New Year! Throughout the month of January, as one of our corners of learning, the students will be learning about the Bible and its importance in our lives and the life of the Church. As we celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy I ask you to keep the 2nd Graders in your prayers as they study the graces that come to us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. At the end of the month they will be going to confession for the first time.

**Nothing is more disturbing than
that moment during an argument when you
realize you're wrong.**

**OLV Knights of Columbus Council 14483
SIXTH ANNUAL "Hap Nightingale"
BEEFSTEAK DINNER
January 23, 2016**

If you would like to be a placemat sponsor \$25 at the event—contact Allan Napolitano Sr. at 201-784-8862.

GREETINGS:

Are you tired of hearing that women are "obsessed" with the pelvic issues and need to move on? ... all the while we witness the obsession emanating from the relentless cheerleaders of abortion and state-mandated contraception programs? The latest accuser is Linda Greenhouse, NY Times legal editorialist, who took the occasion of her Thanksgiving column to accuse supporters of the Little Sisters of the Poor of hating "modernity" and waging a battle against "the secular state in which women can make their choices and design...their life course." Alas, the irony is lost on her. In her world, religious women can readily be barred from "mak[ing] choices" and "design[ing] their lives".

Then there's the "scientific" community's current fixation on inserting or implanting girls as young as 13 with "long active reversible contraception" - IUDs and "Implanon" - for a decade ... or two - because after all, there's no such thing as patience, restraint, or mature reflection where sex is concerned. And who can forget the drumbeat of inevitability as the FDA "debated" whether to approve the "female Viagra" drug, Addyi Following a rambunctious campaign by a "women's coalition" subsidized by (surprise!) Addyi's pharmaceutical manufacturer, the drug hit the market about six weeks ago, where it was predicted to make a Viagra-sized-splash (because, hey, women and men are identical right?) It's, ummm, not doing quite as well as Viagra though. Close to 600,000 men obtained Viagra prescriptions in its first month on the market. As for Addyi—227 prescriptions were requested in its first few weeks. In the months leading to the Supreme Court's consideration of the Little Sister's case - it's up to us to speak or write at our churches, our kids' schools, and our local newspapers, radio and TV programs. About:

- the rights of religious women to conscientious objection;
- about the hypocrisy of those celebrating "women's freedom" while trying to browbeat religious women into submission;
- the silliness of the state's new sexual ethic for women - which leaves women and their children more vulnerable to depression, abortion, and single parenthood.

In the next few weeks and months, we'll be filling you in on our WSFT Supreme Court Brief in the Little Sisters' Mandate challenge.

PRAY, PRAY, PRAY

Father Gustave De Ravignan, S.L 1858

"Believe me, my dear friends - believe an experience ripened by thirty years in the sacred ministry, I do here affirm that all deceptions, all spiritual deficiencies, all miseries, all falls, all faults, and even the most serious wanderings out of the right path, all proceed from this simple source - a want of constancy in prayer. Live the life of prayer; learn to bring everything, to change everything, into prayer - pains and trials and temptations of all kinds. Pray in calm, pray in storm; pray on waking, and pray during the daytime; going and coming, pray; tired out and distracted, pray; whatsoever your repugnance may be, pray. Pray that you may learn to pray. 'Teach us, O Lord, how to pray,' 'But I cannot pray.' That is heresy. Yes, you can always pray. If you feel a disgust - nay, a horror of prayer, pray on; pray in spite of yourself, against yourself. Beg for the courage in prayer which our agonizing Savior merited for you by His pangs in Gethsemane and upon Calvary. Pray, for prayer is the strength which saves, the courage which perseveres, the mystic bridge cast over the abyss which joins the soul to God. 'And being in an agony, He prayed the longer.'"

Mass Intentions

Monday, January 11-St. Paulinus of Friuli, Italy-Bishop of Aquileia	
8:00 Julianna Cybowski	R/b Glenn and Nancy Wolkovitsch
12:00 Frank Adamcik—4th Anniversary	R/b the Adamcik Family
Tuesday, January 12—St. Benedict Biscop-Abbot	
8:00 Jimmy Geraghty—1st Anniversary	R/b the McLarnon Family
12:00 Rev. Zachary H. Monet, O.Carm.—3rd Anniversary	R/b Pat Consoli
Wednesday, January 13—St. Hilary-Bishop of Poitiers, France	
8:00 Anne Brunnuell	R/b Rick and Debbie Quinn
12:00 Domenico Bandiera	R/b the Garzino Family
Thursday, January 14— St. Sava-Bishop of Serbia	
8:00 Josephine Raymond	R/b William Raymond
12:00 Ida May Walsh and John Zanetti -1st Anniversary	R/b the Zanetti Family
Friday, January 15—St. Ida of Waterford, Ireland-Virgin	
8:00 Joseph Piazza	
12:00 Nair Lawlor	R/b Rae Rinaldi
Saturday, January 16—St. Berard & Companions-Martyrs of Spain	
8:00 George Moeser Sr.	R/b the Bolton Family
12:00 Nair Lawlor—1st Anniversary	
4:00 Mary Ruddy	R/b Rose Spincken
5:00 Intentions of the Olsen Family	R/b the Demarie Family
Sunday, January 17— St. Anthony, Abbot	
7:30 Winifred Pavlu	R/b the Kip family
8:15 Mother Clare	
9:30 Mary Ruddy-1st Anniversary	R/b Ed Farrelly
10:45 Jean Bentivegna	R/b the Bentivegna Family
12:00 George Murphy	R/b Kathleen Magarro
6:00 Michael Tarbacca	R/b the Youngmans Family
7:00 Stephen Moshier	R/b the Sir Family

Sanctuary Memorials

The Sanctuary Lamp burns this week for the souls in Purgatory.

The Blessed Virgin Mary Votive Lamp burns this week for birthday blessings for Gino Parlanti Jr., r/b Esty Parlanti.

The St. Joseph Votive Lamp burns this week for the repose of the souls of Renee Foca and Gina Foca, r/b Justin, Matthew & Grayson.

The Hosts and Wine used at Mass this week have been donated for the repose of the souls of John and Anne Bolger, r/b Jim and Rose Youngmans.

Sanctuary Offerings

The Altar Flowers, Bread and Wine, the BVM Votive Lamp, and St. Joseph Votive Lamp, the Sanctuary Lamp in the Church and in the Convent can be dedicated on a weekly basis.

KIDZ KORNER ANSWERS

1. About 2.2 billion. 2. About half. 3. Brazil, with nearly 134 million Catholics. There are about 74 million Catholics in the United States, about 35 million in Poland and about 50 million in Italy. 4. The United States. There are about 160 million Protestants in the US, nearly 29 million in Germany, nearly 60 million in Nigeria and about 14 million in Indonesia. 5. Russia. There are over 101 million Orthodox Christians in Russia, nearly 2 million Orthodox Christians in the United States, about 10 million in Greece, and nearly 4 million in Egypt

We must reject the idea that every time a law is broken, society is guilty rather than the lawbreaker. It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions."

Ronald Reagan .

The Pink Sisters

PHILADELPHIA — For more than 100 years, the cloistered nuns known as the Pink Sisters have worked in shifts to ensure nonstop prayer in Philadelphia’s Chapel of Divine Love.

Now, to address their shrinking numbers and ensure their prayers continue for another century, the Roman Catholic Holy Spirit Adoration sisters have begun quietly reaching out, seeking to grow their order while carefully maintaining their secluded life.

In the last year, they hung a banner outside their chapel and convent as a way to let other people know about their daily public Masses. They’ve granted more interviews with news reporters. And they have begun inviting Catholic women’s organizations and schools to speak to the sisters — with all conversations taking place through the grille in the convent visiting room, of course.

There’s even a subtle recruitment flier hanging just inside the front door of the chapel. It encourages visitors to ask themselves three questions: Do you love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Do you realize the power of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament? Is Jesus calling you to say “yes” to a life of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament?

“We rarely reached out for vocation promotion before the centennial. But now we want young ladies to see how beautiful the life is and how truer the joy when it is without the trappings of material things,” said Sister Maria Clarissa, 55. “We do our part in addressing these challenges, but at the same time, we leave it to the Lord. He’s the one who calls.”

There were once as many as 40 nuns living in the Philadelphia convent. Now there are 20: The youngest is 52, and the oldest is 90. The order was founded in Holland in 1896 with a focus on the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the consecrated bread they uphold as the body and blood of Christ. The rose-hued habits are meant to symbolize the joy the sisters feel honoring the Holy Spirit.

In 1915, nine of the original sisters left the motherhouse and came to Philadelphia, where they were invited to open the order’s second convent. Today there are about 420 Holy Spirit Adoration sisters living in 22 convents in 12 countries. There are three other US convents — in St. Louis; Corpus Christi, Texas; and Lincoln, Nebraska.

It may come as a surprise to some that a group of 20 nuns live a contemplative, secluded life not far from Philadelphia’s famed museums, historic landmarks and government. The sisters leave the cloister only for emergencies, such as medical appointments. When they do venture out, the sisters wear gray so as not to draw too much attention to themselves.

It is a selfless life, focused on offering intercessory prayers on behalf of people they will never meet living in places they will never see. They pray most of the day, together and individually in shifts before the Blessed Sacrament, generally waking up at 5:15 a.m. to prepare for the first daily service, going to bed after the 8 p.m. final prayers.

All the sisters have jobs. Some craft Mass cards and rosaries, the sales of which support the convent. Other sisters respond to letters and answer the phones. Some callers are lonely; others are suicidal. Just listening, the sisters say, seems to make a difference.

Sister Mary Angelica, 55, said she wants people who have lost touch with their faith to know there is always someone praying for them, “no matter what their need may be.”

An Uncommon Error

Along with the frontal assault on public Christmas displays, there is a concerted effort to remove any quotidian mention of Christ’s birth or life. According to these revisionists, Jesus’ existence must be expunged from the historical record. One means to their end is changing the standard nomenclature of BC and AD to BCE and ACE, that is from Before Christ and Anno Domini (Year of the Lord) to the utterly ambiguous Before the Common Era and After the Common Era.

The Great Lesson of Bethlehem

The prophet Micah says that Bethlehem-Ephratha is “too small to be among the clans of Judah” but “from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel” (Micah 5:2). Micah is himself one of the minor prophets and so it is only appropriate that he speaks of a small city, little Bethlehem, from which the great Messiah would come.

How common this is in the Bible: the reversal of expectations, the little giving rise to the great, wonderful things coming where you least expect them. The stuttering Moses speaks up to mighty Pharaoh, the slaves face down the Egyptian army, tiny David kills the giant Goliath.

And this last connection is the important one here. Bethlehem is the city of David, the city of the shepherd King. When Samuel came to that town to find the new king, he went through all of Jesse’s splendid sons and then was told there was one more, little David out in the fields. And it was this overlooked one whom God anointed.

This just seems to be God’s way, and that’s why the Messiah would be born in that tiny town, in an out of the way cave under the earth, because there was no room for him in the inn. Yet, through God’s amazing grace, great things can happen, including the birth of the Messiah. Looking at the small, insignificant town of Bethlehem teaches us three great messages: greatness comes from smallness, never give up hope, and trust always. With those three convictions in our hearts, we’re ready for Christmas.

IRISH GHOST STORY

This story happened a while ago in Dublin, and even though it sounds like an Alfred Hitchcock tale, it’s true.

John Bradford, a Dublin University student, was on the side of the road hitchhiking on a very dark night and in the midst of a big storm. The night was rolling on and no car went by. The storm was so strong he could hardly see a few feet ahead of him. Suddenly, he saw a car slowly coming towards him and stopped. John, desperate for shelter and without thinking about it, got into the car and closed the door. Only to realize there was nobody behind the wheel and the engine wasn’t on. The car started moving slowly. John looked at the road ahead and saw a curve approaching. Scared, he started to pray, begging for his life. Then, just before the car hit the curve, a hand appeared out of nowhere through the window, and turned the wheel. John, paralyzed with terror, watched as the hand came through the window, but never touched or harmed him. Shortly thereafter, John saw the lights of a pub appear down the road, so, gathering strength; he jumped out of the car and ran to it. Wet and out of breath, he rushed inside and started telling everybody about the horrible experience he had just had. A silence enveloped the pub when everybody realized he was crying... And wasn’t drunk. Suddenly, the door opened, and two other people walked in from the dark and stormy night. They, like John, were also soaked and out of breath. Looking around, and seeing John Bradford sobbing at the bar, one said to the other... Look Paddy....there’s that bloomin idiot that got in the car while we were pushing it!!

KIDZ KORNER

1. How many Christians are there in the world today?
2. What share of all Christians around the world are Catholics?
3. Which country has the most Catholics?
4. Which country has the most Protestants?
5. Which country has more Orthodox Christians?

Answers on page four

“Even when one American - who has done nothing wrong is forced by fear to shut his mind and close his mouth, then all Americans are in peril.”

Harry Truman