

CHURCH OF ST. GABRIEL

THE WELCOME BOOK



3250 Arlington Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463-3398

Rectory 718/548-4470 - School 718/548-0444

2009 - 2010

Bienvenue

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WELCOME

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WELCOME

New parishioners, old parishioners and future parishioners we have yet to meet!

May we all find at St. Gabriel's a true spiritual home, a place where we belong and a people with whom we readily share a laugh or a tear in doing the work of the Lord. May we be united in one Lord, one Faith and one Church. May our differences of temperament, heritage and talent enrich the life of our parish.

One of the sources of St. Gabriel's constantly renewed life as a faith community is the participation of its people in worship, prayer, ministry and social activities. Together these form a parish family and express our sense of how we are called to be followers of Jesus Christ in our world today. One way to foster this participation is to help us become more aware of the full extent of all the aspects of St. Gabriel's life.

This edition of *The Welcome Book* seeks to build upon the traditions of the past. It includes updated information about the wide range of liturgical, spiritual, apostolic, educational and social activities which engage us in the life of the parish. It invites us to consider expanding our ways of being connected to St. Gabriel's as we continue our growth as a faith community in the twenty-first century.

God bless,

Father Knapp and Staff

MISSION STATEMENT



We are a Roman Catholic Church called to faith in Jesus Christ, whose teachings are revealed in the Bible, especially the Gospel.

We welcome all who are in full communion with the Church to the table of the Lord. We are charged to pray and to work together with all men and women of good will for the common good in a true spirit of ecumenism.

We are called to offer hospitality to all. We seek, with the grace of God, to worship the Lord faithfully, to teach the Gospel authentically, and to serve the needs of all we meet effectively.

BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR BEGINNINGS

In 1939, Riverdale was truly “country”. A scattering of private homes, large estates and a handful of apartment buildings dotted the landscape from the Harlem River to the city line.

Francis J. Spellman became the Archbishop of New York in May 1939. Surveying the coming needs of this diocese and the inevitable move northward, the Archbishop decided to establish a new parish to the south of St. Margaret’s and to the west of St. John’s in Kingsbridge.

“Old” St. Gabriel’s in Manhattan on 37th Street had been demolished in 1937 to make room for the present Queens-Midtown Tunnel. The new parish in Riverdale would have the same name and become the “new” St. Gabriel’s.

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1939, Archbishop Spellman appointed the Right Reverend Francis W. Walsh as the first Pastor of St. Gabriel’s. Msgr. Walsh was to remain Pastor for the next thirty years until his retirement in 1969 at the age of eighty. It was during his leadership that the values of community involvement and hospitality took root in our parish.





PARISH COUNCIL

The Council, presided over by the Pastor, is the means by which “the Christian faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office, give their help in fostering pastoral activity.” (Canon 536:1)

The Council is neither an executive parliament nor a legislative congress. It is a consultative body which advises the Pastor in all matters. Besides the priests and deacon, members are the school principal, the director of religious education and other appointed representatives of regular parish societies and activities.

The Council ordinarily meets once a month, in Walsh Hall. No meetings are scheduled in December, July and August.

LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

LECTORS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

A number of parishioners serve either as lectors at Sunday and daily liturgies or as Eucharistic ministers who assist the celebrant in distribution of the host or the cup or who bring Holy Communion to the homebound and to those in hospitals and nursing homes. Liturgical and scriptural preparation and refresher programs are held for lectors and Eucharistic ministers as necessary. Please speak to the Pastor if you are interested in participating in either of these ministries.

ALTAR SERVERS

Altar servers assist at all the Sunday masses and other parish liturgies. Service begins in the 6th grade and is open to boys and girls in St. Gabriel's School and the School of Religion. In addition, the servers organize fundraising projects for charities and enjoy outings and social events. Those interested in serving God and our parish at the altar are welcome to join. Practice sessions are held intermittently throughout the year.

The St. Gabriel's Choir sings at the 11 a.m. Sunday liturgy and at all major liturgical functions of the parish. Rehearsals are usually on Wednesday evenings or as announced. New members are welcome and may contact the Director of Music at any time after a Sunday Mass or may call the Rectory for an appointment with the director.



The Folk Choir sings at the 9:30 a.m. Sunday liturgy from September to June. Rehearsals are held on Sunday mornings before the Mass. New members may contact the Folk Choir director any time after Mass or may call the Rectory to make an appointment.

Children's and Youth Choirs are in the process of being formed. The Children's Choir will be composed of children who are in grades 2-5. The Youth Choir will be composed of students grades 6-8 and High School. Those interested in any of the choirs should see the Music Director.



ST. GABRIEL'S SCHOOL

St. Gabriel's School has offered more than 60 years of service to the Riverdale/Spuyten Duyvil community and to St. Gabriel's Parish. It is a Roman Catholic parochial school.

Our school serves Pre-Kindergarten 3, Pre-Kindergarten 4, Kindergarten and Grades 1 to 8. The courses follow the New York State curriculum, and integrate Catholic values and morality in all appropriate places. Children of parish families are especially welcome and are given priority in acceptance. If space allows, children from outside the parish community are accepted.

Our school is happy to serve small classes with excellent academics, including an advanced computer program in Grades 3 to 8, foreign language instruction in Grades 1 to 8, a faculty staffed after-school program, and after-school art and music programs.

Our students have won awards for their television productions, and have placed first, second and third in the Bronx Catholic School Fair and the Mt. St. Michael Academic Olympics.

THE HOME-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

While the governance, administration and supervision of St. Gabriel's School are the functions of the Principal in collaboration with the Pastor and the parish school administration, the Home-School Association is a valuable means for accomplishing our educational objectives.

Its purpose is to promote a clearer understanding of the mutual educational responsibilities of parents and teachers and to encourage cooperation between home and school in the fulfillment of their goals.

Regular membership is open to parents or guardians of present pupils of the school, members of the faculty and members of the clergy of St. Gabriel's Parish. Regular meetings are announced.

THE ST. GABRIEL SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The St. Gabriel School of Religion is a full religious education program for children in Grades K-8 who attend any public or private school other than the parish school. It meets on Sunday mornings from 10:30 to 12:00. The academic year runs from September to early May.

Re-registration for currently enrolled students takes place in March for the following year. Registration for new students takes place in September or as announced. A baptismal certificate is required for registration.

A minimum of two years of instruction is required for the reception of the Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation. Commonly First Eucharist and Reconciliation are received in the 2nd Grade and Confirmation in the 8th grade. However, consistent attendance throughout the eight years of the program is necessary to provide the best foundation in the faith.

The Director of Religious Education may be reached through St. Gabriel's School and the Religious Education office.

Volunteers are always needed and welcome to help staff this vital parish program. Please contact the Director of Religious Education for information.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (R.C.I.A.)

How does an adult become a Catholic? In recent years the Church has restored a communal process for becoming a Catholic Christian which originated in the early centuries of the Church. This process is called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Interested adults making inquiry about becoming a Catholic join with parishioners to form a community of discussion, prayer and reflection. The program offers the opportunity to study the scriptures, to examine the teaching and tradition of the Church and to experience the active life of the parish.

The initial phase of the process can take as long as is deemed necessary for each person making inquiry.

When ready, the candidates are called by the Bishop to the Initiation of Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Lent is the final, intensive phase of the preparation process, which culminates with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery at the Easter Vigil, when the Initiation Sacraments take place, and which is extended through the fifty days of the celebration of the Easter season.

SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUPS

St. Gabriel's has two Scripture groups which meet each week to discuss the readings for the Liturgy of the Word for the following Sunday. One group meets on Thursday evenings from 8 to 9 in the Rectory and one group on Friday afternoons from 1 to 2 in Walsh Hall. They do not meet in the summer.

The study of Scripture is on three levels: the meaning at the time of Jesus; the meaning in the life of the Church for which the Word was written down; the meaning for the Church in today's world. This approach nurtures the prayer and spiritual life of those who attend.

Both groups have studied the Old Testament, the Gospels, and other New Testament writings. All parishioners, especially lectors, who are ministers of the Word, would find either group of great interest and are invited to attend at any time during the year.



Scripture Study Group

APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY TO THE AGING

The “aged” of today were the backbone and support of the parish during its years of growth. Providing the services described below is a small way of saying “Thank you” and of demonstrating to our Senior citizens that the parish has not forgotten them.

NURSING HOME VOLUNTEERS – “MAKE A DIFFERENCE”:



Nursing Home Ministry

Home and Hospital is served in an auxiliary capacity. The volunteers bring news of the outside world and give the residents an opportunity to talk about their interests. In many cases, the residents’ reminiscences reveal fascinating facts about their active days and the visit becomes one of reciprocal enjoyment and fulfillment. Added to this is the enormous satisfaction the volunteers derive from performing a truly Christian act. If you too would like to “make a difference,” call the Rectory.

Participants in this activity spend one or two hours a week visiting and interacting with residents in the nearby nursing homes which are served by St. Gabriel’s in its regular ministry: The Riverdale Nursing Home, the Fieldston Lodge Nursing Home and the Fairfield Division of the Hebrew Home. The Frances Schervier

INTERFAITH CAREGIVERS

Interfaith caregivers of the Northwest Bronx is another service provided by St. Gabriel’s Ministry to the Aging. It seeks to develop community between volunteers and the home bound elderly from diverse neighborhoods of the Bronx. The trained volunteers provide support and assistance to help the homebound continue to live with independence and dignity. Periodic phone calls, escorting to treatments or doctors appointments and just a simple walk is a source of much joy and satisfaction for both the caregiver and the care receiver.

PRISONER AND VICTIM EMPOWERMENT

Our PAVE volunteers reach out and respond to the needs of the prisoners at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility and endeavor to journey with both prisoners and those who are crime victims, providing the spiritual and emotional support they need at this time in their lives.



RESPECT LIFE COMMITTEE

Promoting Christian awareness of important human life issues from abortion to euthanasia is the concern of the Respect Life Committee. The committee distributes educational materials to promote life values, plans the Respect Life Sunday activities, and coordinates the January bus trip and visit with legislators in Washington. Funds and gifts are raised annually to benefit one or another institution where the corporal works of mercy are performed to help pregnant women and their children. The committee also sponsors lecture series on life issues. All parishioners are invited to join.

THANKSGIVING CLOTHING COLLECTION

A Thanksgiving clothing collection takes place annually, usually on the Saturday and Sunday preceding Thanksgiving Day. At that time parishioners bring new and used clothing to the St. Vincent de Paul Society truck parked in the school yard. Hundreds of pounds of usable clothing have been donated in the past for distribution to the poor.

TABLE SHARE

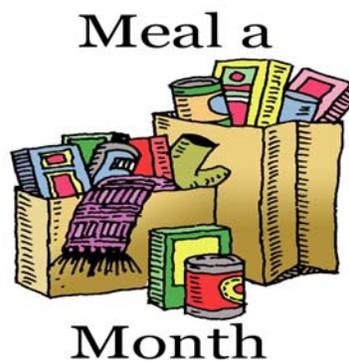
Under St. Gabriel's Table-Share program, at announced times during the year, shopping bags are placed at the church exits for parishioners to take home and, following the instructions in each bag, to return on a specified date containing the canned goods requested. During a five-week period of staggered return dates, volunteers collect and deliver the cans to a local food pantry for distribution to the poor.

ST. GABRIEL MEAL-A-MONTH

St. Gabriel's Parish has joined with sixteen other parishes and congregations of various denominations in the area in preparing and serving a noontime meal to over 170 men and women hosted by the Yonkers Sharing Community shelter and soup kitchen for the homeless.

Parishioners participate in preparing one or more tins of ziti, which they bring to Walsh Hall on the morning of the second Friday of each month, or to the Rectory the previous evening. On that Friday morning, the volunteers prepare meatballs which are added to the ziti. The finished product is transported to the Community by volunteers, who remain to serve the day's guests. Occasional donations of homemade cookies or cakes are welcome additions to the parish-prepared meal.

The project has grown since its inception as has the need for more volunteer cooks, servers and transporters. More detailed information will gladly be supplied by the Rectory.



THE GIVING TREE

The Giving Tree has become a special way for St. Gabriel parishioners of all ages to observe the season of Advent in preparation for Christmas.

The project enlists the talents and generosity of the entire St. Gabriel community, beginning with the children of the parish. The youngsters prepare colored paper cut-outs on which are listed specific items needed by individuals and families whose names have been submitted by social service agencies.

The cut-outs are hung on the "Giving Tree," which is placed in a prominent spot in church on the first Sunday of Advent. Parishioners are invited to take one or more of the colorful figures, shop for the items requested and return them to the tree, wrapped as gifts and identified by the original cut-out. Many requests are for clothing and toys for needy children.

The parish has found this to be as a joyful and productive way to celebrate the Birth of Jesus.



Giving Tree

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The Mothers Group

Mothers and Dads of children up to three years of age meet in Walsh Hall on Wednesday mornings from 9-11, September through May, to share the common, and sometimes not-so-common, experiences, problems, solutions and concerns of the early childhood years. Participants have reported that it's a great place to interact with other parents and, for first-time moms and dads, to learn from the veterans.

While the parents enjoy the talk, coffee and bagels, the toddler get their early training and practice in social skills. A \$50 fee covers expenses for the year.



Youth Group

High school and college students are invited to join the St. Gabriel Youth Group. Activities include a parish Youth Mass and luncheon every second Sunday of the month, with students participating as Eucharistic ministers, lectors, altar servers and ushers, or as members of the choir. A social and sports calendar consisting of trips, fund-raisers for charity, socials, barbecues, and a boy's high school basketball team round out the year.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

St. Gabriel has a wide-ranging recreational program which is supervised by the St. Gabriel Athletic and Recreation Committee. Parishioners of all ages are encouraged to join in the action and participate in such programs as the student basketball teams, the Friday sports nights held periodically during the year, and in special athletic events such as the Danny Monahan Basketball Tournament. The Committee welcomes volunteers - please call the Rectory.

THE LEISURE CLUB

The Leisure Club meets every Monday afternoon, September through June, in Walsh Hall. An informal group, it has no officers and volunteers prepare coffee and refreshments. The club affords members a chance to spend a few hours in a relaxed atmosphere, playing a variety of card games, Bingo and Scrabble, or just socializing. An occasional "wine and cheese" party adds to the fun as do birthday and anniversary celebrations.

During the year the group sponsors trips to destinations/activities such as Milleridge Inn, Millennium Theater, Belmont Race Track, Atlantic City Cruise, Hyde Park Culinary Institute, Westchester Dinner Theater, and the Passion Play in Jersey City.

THE LIMITED RAFFLE AND GALA

The Limited Raffle is an annual fundraising event that culminates with a gala social evening late in April. Each year a committee, along with the Pastor, designates an area of special parish need which the proceeds would help meet.

The event has become a highlight of the year, benefiting the parish with a happy combination of good food, good music and great people

COFFEE KLATCH

Sunday morning "after the Eight" has become a catch-word for a gathering of the bagel and coffee regulars who meet in Walsh Hall to chat, eat, and occasionally celebrate birthdays, births, loss of weight, new outfits, and anything else that can be used as an excuse to bake a cake and blow out candles! Volunteers prepare the coffee and shop for

the goodies. It has become a great way to see old friends – including those who return to say “hello,” proving no one ever really “leaves” St. Gabriel’s – and make new ones.

Some nine o’clockers have been known to sneak in early. Just one visit makes anyone a regular.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Crafters of all levels of experience meet weekly to share creative designs. The group meets on Tuesdays at 1:00.

BOOK CLUB

This group of parishioners meets once a month on Friday nights to discuss a current book.

MASS SCHEDULE

Weekdays - 6:45, 9:00, 12:15 pm
Saturday - 9:00

Sunday 5:00 pm (Saturday), 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 am , and 12:30 pm

DEVOTIONS

Recitation of the Rosary daily, except Sunday after the 9:00 and 12:15
Masses
Novena, Miraculous Medal Monday after the 9:00 Mass

PARISH CALENDAR

Monday

Leisure Club—12:45pm Walsh Hall

Wednesday

Mother's Group 9-11 am Walsh Hall
Arts and Crafts 1:00—2:15pm Walsh Hall

Thursday

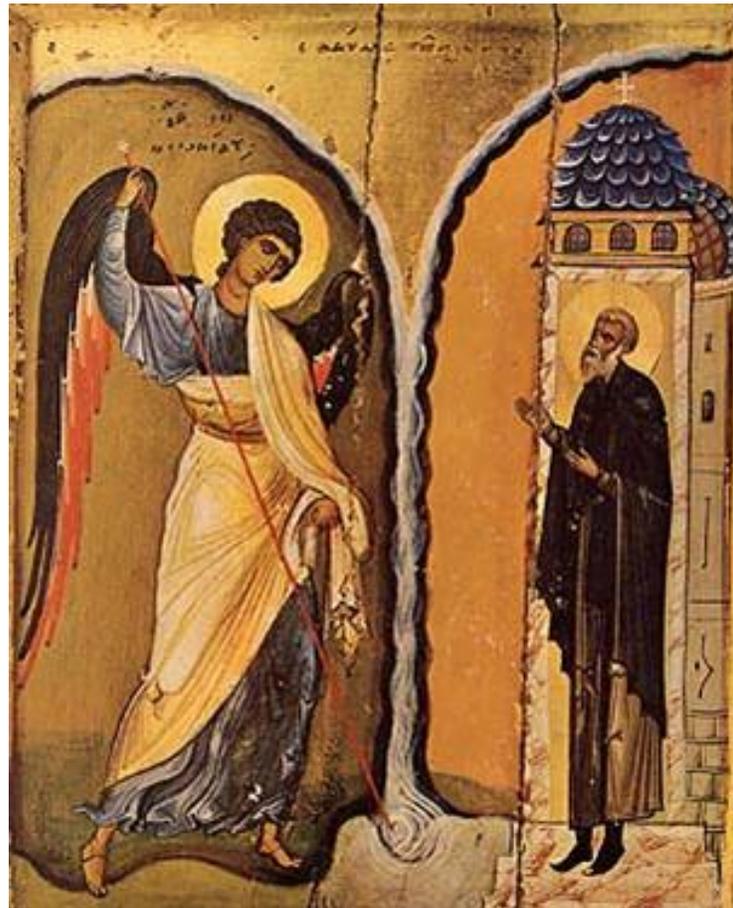
Scripture Group 8 - 9 in the Rectory

Friday

Book Club (meets on the first Friday)
Scripture Group - 1 - 2 in Walsh Hall

Sunday

School of Religion 10:30 -11:45



Archangel Gabriel appears to Daniel

