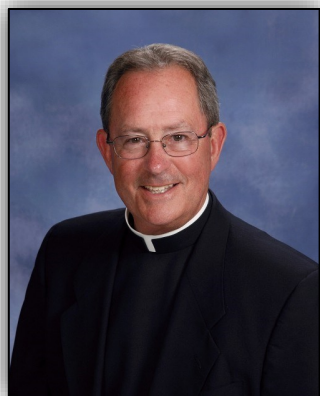


Happy New Year!

Our Lady of the Assumption

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Dear Parishioners,

A few words and pictures to wish you a blessed New Year and to capture some of the moments we shared during the holidays.

Christmas, as we know, was like none other. Yet, I always like to remind people that the first Christmas was really a perfect mess and not the perfect Hallmark moment we invent. Mary and Joseph had to make an arduous trip to Bethlehem, there was no room in the inn, giving birth in a stable with a manger was not ideal. Our spiritual task at Christmas is always to look deeply into the Nativity story and discover again the great love God has for each of us and the whole human family. Christ comes to be born in our hearts.



I would like to use this letter to share with you what OLA has been doing during the Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas seasons. Even through Covid-19 we have been able to keep things moving forward.

At **Thanksgiving** we collected food cards and donations to support the food pantries and agencies that have always been part of our Human Concerns Outreach. Your generosity was overflowing as always. \$7,000.00 was collected in gift cards and donations. We met our Thanksgiving goal and had enough for a second distribution at Christmas.

The first Sunday of **Advent** came right on the heel of the Thanksgiving weekend. We sang O Come, O Come, Emmanuel behind our masks as we began our preparation for the Christmas feast.

The second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 6th was also the **Feast of St. Nicholas**. The stately bishop, "Rick Doty", made his appearance outside as people came for Holy Communion in the parking lot. Gift bags containing chocolate coins, clementines, candy canes and coloring pages, were prepared by the Faith Formation Team and handed out by Youth Elves.



Frank Schaefer was awarded the **2020 St. Nicholas Award**. This award is given in memory of Jim Sanford by his wife Kathy. Jim was our St. Nicholas for many years. The award recognizes a high school senior who is generous with the gift of time and often unseen for his many acts of kindness following the example of St. Nicholas.



Youth Ministry held their annual **Wreath Sale** on the St. Nicholas Weekend. The weather was a bit nasty but those elves were out there creating Christmas cheer.

The **Angel Tree Program** was a great success. We were not able to accept wrapped packages this year, so we collected gift cards and donations to support our partnership with 10 agencies and shelters in the local area. What an amazing level of

participation. \$10,000 was donated to this project. Thanks to the members of the Parish Council Human Concerns Committee who organized this year's Angel Tree.



Our Lady of Guadalupe – Rosemary Gavin and members of the Youth Core Team recorded a YouTube presentation for Our Lady's Feast on December 12th.

Christmas Carols with Jay Paluch, Rocky Tassie and Grace Hartl were recorded and put up on YouTube. We received numerous messages of joy expressing how good it was to hear those voices that are such a part of our liturgical celebrations.

Prayer Requests—Please keep Fr. Daley in your prayers as he adjusts to his new living arrangements at Kingsway Living Center. His address:

**Rev. James Daley, Kingsway Community,
323 Kings Road #1, Schenectady, NY 12304**

The **Sisters of St. Joseph at the Provincial House** have experienced a severe outbreak of Covid-19. Several sisters have died from the virus. Your prayers for the sisters are most appreciated.



Financial Support and 2020 Tax Forms—Thank you for your continued support of the parish during this Covid-19 experience. We have been able to maintain staff and programming over these many months. This is a true blessing. Our ability to stream and record Mass and other events keeps us all in touch. **The 2020 Contribution Statements** are available. Please call the parish office (518)785-0234 or email: ourlady@nycap.rr.com to request a statement. We will mail it to you or if you provide **your email address**, we can send it to you that way.

Gratitude & Blessings—I cannot express adequately my gratitude to all the volunteers who have made it possible for us to stream/record our YouTube Mass; assist with Saturday and Sunday Communions in the parking lot; and assist at Sunday Mass. Each week I receive notes from grateful parishioners who feel the spiritual strength of the parish during this time.

Sending you my prayers and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year 2021,



*Fr. Burke
and the OLA Parish Staff*