

## MILESTONES OF ST. JOHN NEUMANN PARISH

Sometimes it's hard to stop and smell the roses and notice the beauty around you when life is in full swing. This little "history" of our parish may shed light into corners not seen to show you the love, growth and beauty stemming from the merging of St. Raymond Church and St. John of God Church. Their "child", St. John Neumann Parish is alive and growing up to be a strong, beautiful and lively parish!

Thanks to each and every one of you who have amended traditions, much as in-laws would for a newly married couple, to make our family stronger.

A little trivia. . . Did you know that many of the beautiful flowers you see at both campuses are the re-planted bulbs from flowers that made their first appearance on the altar and side altars of both churches? They were there when you attended Mass, and they have returned to greet you on your way back in and when praying in our Rosary Garden. God's Peace!

- 4/23/2009 Rev. Ernest R. Soprano, K.H.S. resigned as Pastor of St. Francis, Vineland, NJ.
- 5/15/2009 Rev. Ernest R. Soprano, K.H.S. appointed Parochial Vicar for the pending merger of St. Raymond Church and St. John of God Church.
- 6/7/2009 Picnic at Cape May County Zoo – combined St. Raymond and St. John of God parishes.
- 1/25/2010 Rev. Ernest R. Soprano, K.H.S. appointed as Administrator of St. Raymond and St. John of God.
- 3/15/2010 Rev. Ernest R. Soprano, K.H.S. appointed Pastor of St. John Neumann Parish.
- 5/18/2010 Merger announced by Bishop Galante to Pastor, Father Soprano who then announced it to the people.
- 6/10/2010 Parish Mission given by Rev. Msgr. George Tomicsek from St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia where St. John Neumann's Shrine is located; his body is still intact.
- 6/18/2010 Rev. Robert Fritz appointed as Senior Priest.
- 6/23/2010 Official first Day as the Parish of St. John Neumann.
- 6/25/2010 First Marriage as St. John Neumann Parish – Michael Gurdineer and Allison A. Richards by Rev. Christopher Bakey.
- 6/28/2010 Msgr. Timothy Ryan joins St. John Neumann Parish as retired priest in residence.
- 7/12/2010 First Parish project – Parish of St. John Neumann cookbook published.
- 7/18/2010 First Baptism- Sophia Loretta Neemeth.
- 8/8/2010 Offices open in former preschool of St. John of God.
- 8/21-22/2010 Spirit Players first theatrical show as a merged parish: "Hat's off to America." They have increased from 4 to 8 performances per year beginning this year. All shows have been taken to nursing homes to entertain the sick.
- 9/2010 Our preschool begins its first year at Cape Trinity Catholic to form a comprehensive campus educating children from 8 months to 18 years.
- 9/19/2010 St. John Neumann website listed.
- 9/21/2010 Start of Religion classes in New Parish.
- 10/3/2010 October Fest at St. Raymond Campus and drawing of first Parish raffle.
- 10/10/2010 Parish of St. John Neumann hosts its first Christ Child Baby Shower *as a merged community*.
- 10/16/2010 Father Soprano is formally installed as Pastor of St. John Neumann after having merged St. Raymond and St. John of God churches.
- 11/14/2010 Rededication of St. Raymond Statue refurbished by Dick King, a parishioner.
- 11/14/2010 Dedication of Portrait of St. John Neumann donated by Flanigan family whose son was the beatifying miracle for St. John Neumann's cause for sainthood.
- 12/15/2010 First Parish Penance Service.
- 12/21/2010 The John Walter Cape Community Band appears for the first time at St. John Neumann and has been performing biannually ever since!
- 1/10/2011 Beginning of Eucharistic Adoration – 40 hours per week at St. Raymond's campus.
- 2/12-16/11 First of the Dominican Preachers' Retreat.
- 4/15/2011 "Blowing Bubbles for Autism" at St. John of God Campus coordinated by the

- Altar and Rosary Society.
- 5/01/2011 First Communion Class at St. Neumann Parish.
- 5/10/2011 First “May Crowning” of Mary at St. Raymond’s Campus.
- 5/15/2011 Lending Library in front of Parish Offices established.
- 5/24/2011 Parish trip to visit St. John Neumann’s Shrine in Philadelphia and St. Katherine Drexel Shrine in Bensalem, PA.
- 5/26/2011 First Parish Pastoral Council Meeting of St. John Neumann Parish.
- 6/2/2011 First Finance Council Meeting of St. John Neumann Parish.
- 6/12/2011 Holy Name Society first annual Communion Breakfast in St. John Neumann Parish.
- 6/18/2011 First Confirmation class of the Parish.
- 7/5/2011 Father Gerald Dolan our summer priest from Florida, begins Tuesday “Light a Fire” Session.
- 8/13-14/2011 Wildwood Catholic H.S. Scholarship drive.
- 9/9/2011 Pro-Life Ministry begins in the New Parish.
- 10/1-2/2011 First Parish Ministry weekend.
- 10/3/2011 Mary’s Garden Dedication to Jennie Soprano and to all Mothers, including the blessing of the Garden’s “Rosary”, which is a meandering path where each stone represents a rosary bead.
- 10/29-30/2011 Harvest Bags for the poor are distributed.
- 11/5-6/2011 First Harvest weekend; 20,000 pounds of food for the hungry of Catholic Charities, Holy Redeemer, Lower Township Elementary School District and the Lower Township Rescue Squad. Now it is a Thanksgiving & Lenten tradition.
- 11/15/2011 Bereavement Ministry started.
- 11/22/2011 Father Fritz becomes Catholic Chaplain to Lower Township Police Department.
- 12/26/2011 Eucharistic Adoration moved to St. John of God Chapel with new adoration tabernacle.
- 1/23/2012 Pro-Life ministry in the Right-to-Life March.
- 4/9/2012 Launch of our New & Improved website!
- 4/22/2012 Legion of Mary hosts their first Curia meeting as St. John Neumann.
- 5/20/2012 First Annual Vendor’s Fair – beginning a yearly tradition.
- 5/26/2012 Vineyard Planted by Eagle Scouts as donation to our parish so we may produce our own Altar Wine. The vines were donated by the family of the late Eugene Sole and planted as his son’s Eagle Scout project.
- 5/31/2012 First Finance Council Scholarships awarded to our Parish youth to attend Wildwood Catholic High School.
- 6/6-10/2012 Msgr. Tomichek’s Retreat called “Give Me Holiness”.
- 6/20/2012 Stage enlarged, funded by our Spirit Players, to accommodate larger venues.
- 8/11/2012 Dedication of Vineyard at St. John of God campus.
- 9/27/2012 First Parish Council “Calendar Meeting”.
- 10/13/2012 Parish sends two buses of pilgrims to our Diocesan pilgrimage in Washington DC.
- 12/12/2012 First annual Pot Luck Dinner – Merging the traditions of the Good Samaritan’s yearly client appreciation dinner with the Spirit Player’s annual Sing-a-long!
- 4/2013 Novena to St. John Neumann instituted after the 9 a.m. Mass on Wednesdays.
- 5/25/2013 Eucharistic Prayer Cards offered at Chapel for your dedication of a Holy Hour.
- 11/2013 Retail Shoppe re-established at St. John Neumann’s office with expanded hours
- 2/10/2014 First Blood Drive conducted By St. Neumann’s Parish Nurses at St. John of God Hall.
- 3/25/2014 On the Feast Day of “The Visitation,” “Neumann’s Neighbors” ministry formed to visit our homebound and keep them connected to our parish.
- 4/1/2014 Fr. Fernando Rafael Carmona officially joined our parish team as full-time Parochial Vicar.
- 4/22/2014 Our website can now be translated into multiple languages by clicking on the flags of the countries.
- 10/2014 The first of our Catawba grapes were harvested.

12/12/2014 First celebration of our Lady of Guadalupe including “Mañanitas” at 5 a.m., an evening procession in the streets surrounding St. Raymond Church, followed by Mass and a celebration including traditional food, music and dancing.

12/20/2014 CCD cake sale for House of Charity

3/14/2015 “Set a Plate for Jesus” kicked-off by Bishop Sullivan for parish families to provide meals for Catholic Charities in Rio Grande, NJ to distribute.

5/25/2015 “A Rosary for Our Military” and St. Neumann’s Military Outreach kicked-off.

6/2/2015 St. Neumann Adoration Prayer booklets now available in our Adoration Chapel.

6/23/2015 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass at 9 a.m. followed by display of history & Brunch.

7/1/2015 Rev. Sigfrido Troche, M.SS.CC joins our team as full time Parochial Vicar.

8/15/2015 Dedication of Mary’s Shrine located adjacent to St. John of God Church.

11/28/2015 Debut of our new Choir robes for Advent.

11/28/2015 Beginning of our Parish retreat with Fr. John Anglin, OFM. 12/23/2015 First donation of \$1408.54 to Catholic Charities “Ready, Vet, Go!” from St. Neumann’s Military Outreach.

2/22/2016 Arctic entrance added to the main entrance at St. John of God Church.

2/28/2016 “Set a plate for Jesus” - Corporal Work: Feed the Hungry surpasses 1400 meals!

3/5/2016 “24 Hours for the Lord” – 24 continuous hours of Confession, Adoration & Devotions hosted by St. John Neumann Parish for our Diocese with many priests helping.

4/13/2016 Stained glass behind altar at St. John of God church replaced with custom stained glass depicting a Eucharistic motif.

4/25/2016 Our Lady of Fatima Shrine established in the entrance to the left of the altar at St. John of God Church.

4/27/2016 Our parish grapes grown on our church property become wine for our Eucharistic Celebrations.

5/1/2016 5 East Hudson in Villas purchased for expansion of parking lot at St. Raymond Campus.

5/25/2016 Father Soprano was appointed to his 2<sup>nd</sup> six-year term with us as our Pastor by Bishop Dennis Sullivan for a term from 6/1/2016 to 5/31/2022.

May 2016 Corporal Work: Visit the Imprisoned - Stamped envelopes, writing materials were collected and donated to prisoners in South Jersey from our parish.

June 2016 Corporal Work: Clothe the Naked – diapers, wipes, onesies collected for newborns.

9/1/2016 We welcome our new Welcome Ministry who has begun welcoming our new parishioners!

1/31/2017 Msgr. Timothy Ryan retires to St. Mary’s in Cherry Hill and Rev. Sigfrido Troche, M.SS.CC parts from our parish – both with our thanks, our prayers, and our warm wishes!

2/25/2017 Father Cesar A. Rebolledo Ramirez in residence at Notre Dame de la Mer will be offering Mass at 5pm on Sundays and administering Sacraments for our Spanish speaking parishioners.

3/26/2017 Our Knights of Columbus host their 1<sup>st</sup> Spaghetti Dinner to benefit our parish in our hall on Town Bank Road. A Grand Success!

4/1/2017 Rev. Robert J. Fritz returns in residence in our parish (for a repeat performance)!

6/11/2017 Our Knights Of Columbus, Stella Maris Council 3546, held their “Rock for Kids Music Festival” on the grounds of St. John of God Campus for the first time. This was their 5<sup>th</sup> annual event.

6/14/2017 Father Soprano celebrated our 1<sup>st</sup> Blue Mass at St. John of God Church on Flag Day.

June 2017 The stained glass windows from behind the Altar at St. John of God were repurposed in our Arctic Entrance. They are both decorative and filter the light coming in!

8/20/2017 Statue of Our Blessed Mother donated by the Price family is dedicated in the memory of Tom Price

11/4/2017 Our Military Outreach debuts our line of Military Teddy Bears, “Go Bags” for those promoting the sales of our rosaries, and “Cammo” Brochure & Rosary holders for businesses and organizations wishing to promote our cause at our annual Christmas Bazaar

12/10/2017 Our Legion of Mary begins leading and hosting their Praesidium’s Curia Meetings.

- 2/14/2018 Our new Crucifix was viewed publicly for the first time at our Ash Wednesday Mass at St. John of God church. This Crucifix will be Blessed by Bishop Sullivan at noon on May 17th.
- January 2018 *Going Green!* ~ New Energy Efficient Air Conditioning replaces unrepairable unit at St. John of God Hall.
- Spring 2018 Blessing Bags were introduced by our Parish Council to aid individuals in need with personal care necessities. Assembled by our CCD students, they are carried by parishioners to hand out to those in need as they are encountered.
- Spring 2018 *Going Green!* ~ Finalized Solar Projects at *both* St. Raymond and St. John of God campuses
- June 2018 Catholic Strong Capital Campaign presented to parish population in-pew.
- July 2018 *Catholic Strong Initiative* ~ Resurfacing of Church parking lot at St. Raymond completed.
- Oct./Nov. 2018 *Catholic Strong Initiative* ~ Paving completed around St. John of God Church for Handicapped Access to all entrances.
- 11/3/2018 Chaplains packs were kicked off by our Military Outreach at our Christmas Bazaar to spread the prayer of “A Rosary for Our Military” to Military Chaplains and the families they encounter.
- Nov. 2018 Thanksgiving Update – 4,364 Plates for Jesus to date!
- 12/9-12/2018 Parish Advent Mission conducted by Bill Wegner from Good News International.
- Jan. 2019 Our Knight of Columbus make our hall at St. Raymond campus their new home and began offering occasional Breakfasts and Spaghetti Dinners in the hall.
- 3/21-24/2019 Parish Lenten Retreat: “What is the Lord Trying to Tell You?” offered by Father Junior Flores of the Paterson Diocese.
- April 2019 Parish transitions to web based version of our software.
- 7/10/2019 Our parish Pro-Life Ministry is reorganized and reactivated after the retirement of key members.
- 7/15/2019 Our Diocese’s “Vitality” Healthcare Ministry met with four of our ministries to the homebound to provide viable information and contacts we can use to aid those to whom we minister.
- August 2019 Our Retail Shoppe reorganized our space and created new advertisements, business cards, and posters to include not only items for sale but our Living Library & Pray it Forward aspects; one can take & pass on books, rosaries & medal, or religious gifts from our “gently used” and donated items (no donation required). This allows those of any means to minister and evangelize by circulating these items ~ expanding on Father Soprano’s “Living Library concept” that these items be used and make a difference in one’s faith and not remain on one of our shelves gathering dust. Come & see!
- 9/21/2019 Our Parish Pro-Life Ministry kicks off its 1<sup>st</sup> parish wide Spiritual adoption. Prayers will be offered for them daily for the next 9 months.
- 10/5/2019 Our Pro-life Ministry conducted their first Pro-Life post card drive addressed to our local government representatives. They were hand delivered by Father Soprano and Mike Beck.
- 2/22/2020 Msgr. Timothy Ryan passed away. His Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. John of God Church by Bishop Dennis Sullivan and Father Soprano, who offered the Homily for his friend. May He Rest In God’s Peace!
- March 2020 Windows were replaced at our Convent & School. This will improve energy efficiency, and also achieved one of our Catholic Strong Goals.
- 3/20/2020 Mass, Events, Office & Building closed due to the COVID 19 pandemic.
- 4/21/2020 Fr. Gerald M. Dolan, who had assisted our parish for several summers passed away. May He Rest In God’s Peace!
- 6/23/2020 St. John Neumann Parish marked our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a merged entity amidst COVID quarantine. St Raymond Church and St. John of God Church united on 6/23/2010.
- 10/7/2020 Father Soprano & Our Knights of Columbus dedicated the new shrine & prayer space for Our Lady of Grace, which was relocated from the Knights’ old meeting place to welcome all who enter her new home at St. John Neumann Parish ~ St. Raymond Hall in Villas.

May 2021

Debut of the Display screen on the Altar at St. John of God Church as a visual aid to parishioners during Mass. We also officially kicked-off our technology ministry, which was formed to aid in this and similar efforts moving forward.

July 2021

A lighthouse was placed at the entrance to our shared driveway with Haven House in Memory of Tommy E. Morency, son of Tina & Thomas J. Morency.

9/4/2021

Bishop Sullivan dedicated the new Allen Organ at St. John of God Church donated in Memory of Connie Barrett and Madeleine Moretti by Father Miles Barrett - who has also been instrumental in its installation and in training our organists. Concelebrating with Bishop Sullivan was our Pastor, Father Ernest Soprano, Father Miles Barrett, and Father Junior Flores.