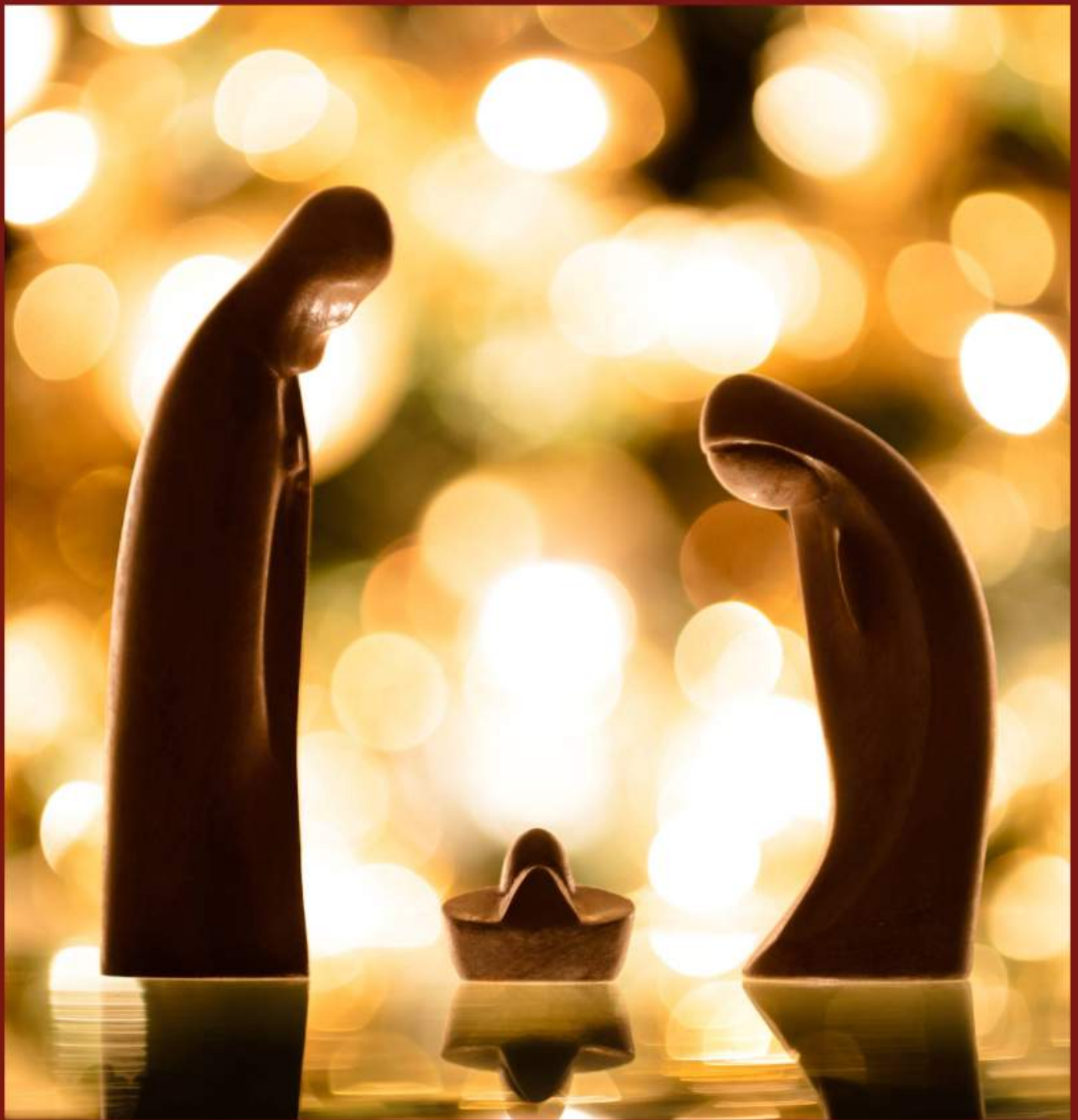


Christmas 2023



SS. Isidore and Maria Parish

GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT

Love is Born

The world wasn't supposed to turn out this way. Where is the peace, tranquility, justice, and tenderness? The night of my birth was such a quiet, unassuming one. There was hardly a notice, in the ordinariness of it all, of the serene holiness emanating from my simple manger bed. Love was born into the world. I am Love...a gift given freely to every human being and all of creation. All is blessed. All is one. I am the glue that holds all of life together...its beginning and end. I came as the Son of God to show you, to show everyone, that they are sons and daughters of God, too! To show you that Love is at your center...that I live in each of your souls. You are sacred. You are holy.



*Rev. Mark S. Suslenko,
Pastor*

Is it so hard to believe that you are all children of God and that each of you comes from the same well-spring of Love? That is the simple message I really wanted the world to know and understand. What a difference it all makes...when you understand where you have come from, who you are, and where you are going. All human beings, regardless of what they believe, where they live or how they look, are the same.

Why all this fighting and turmoil? It is hard to believe that this world is the same holy sanctuary I once called home...where my mother nursed me and my earthly father taught me our trade. What has happened...here and in every corner of the world? Why do conflict, hunger, grief, anger, hatred, and heartache continue? Why are so many of my children hurting, cast aside, or lost? They didn't listen then, and they are still not listening now. It doesn't need to be. It should not be.

People just don't want to understand...they cannot believe it is true. It's not hard to imagine! God made you. God loves you. God sustains you. We are one. Where else can you find meaning? Purpose? Hope?

I thought if everyone could understand the expanse of God's love, it could work...that people could work together to build God's kingdom...that contentment, peace, and harmony could be found in abundance and shared by all. Here is a place you can start...today...right now!

Give yourself the greatest Christmas gift! It's already been perfectly wrapped by your Heavenly Father and is a simple gift. Be who you are! You are a beloved, blessed, wonderful child of God. Be who you are! It's not fancy or complicated and doesn't cost money. Be who you are...not who the world wants you to be or who you think you need to be, but WHO YOU ARE. Then, you will begin to see every person you meet, whether good or bad, the same or different, as a living tabernacle of my Presence. Realizing this, how can you harm one of your brothers or sisters, especially the most fragile ones?

You can change. The world can change. It's not too late. Love is born, faith helps us see, and hope springs eternal.

Be who you are. Merry Christmas.

Fr. Mark S. Suslenko
Pastor
SS. Isidore and Maria Parish
Glastonbury, Connecticut

Welcome and Merry Christmas to all our friends celebrating with us the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

We invite you to join with all of us at **SS. Isidore and Maria Parish** as we journey through the year, uncovering the significance of the Gospel and its impact on our lives. Our faith community is united in prayerful mutual support, led by our Pastor, Father Mark, as we embrace our sacramental life.

If you are searching for a faith community that provides spiritual support for you and your family, Faith Formation for your children, comfort in times of pain and loss, and accompaniment on your personal faith journey, please **come and join our parish**.

Here are some thoughts shared by current parishioners about what SS. Isidore and Maria Parish means to them:

I was struck by Father's words about the King and Queen of peace and the war that had just broken out in Israel. It was ironic how the King and Queen of peace, Mary and Jesus, walked and lived in a place now filled with greed and violence. They believed that all people should live in harmony and love each other like brothers and sisters, yet we still live in a place of competition and unhappiness. It's even more ironic how, in an area of holiness and faith, where Jesus was born and lived, bombs and missiles are being fired, and thousands are dying. Who would have guessed that a place where the **King of Peace** lived could become a land of violence and war? - **Jonathan R., Confirmation Student, after attending an Evening Prayer Service**



We moved out of town last year but continue attending Mass at SS. Isidore and Maria. We feel at home here. We continue to make an effort to attend Mass here regularly so that our children know their faith is with them as they grow. We love the music, the community, Father Mark's sermons, and the perspective they offer each week. - **Briana and Paul F.**

SS. Isidore and Maria Parish fosters a real sense of community, a sense of family. When I arrive for Mass, I am greeted by people who know me, and after Mass, people linger to enjoy one another's company. Babies are passed around, older children watch younger children, and seniors are checked on. It's a great picture of the **Body of Christ**. - **Regina C.**

We love the warm sense of community we have experienced all these years. Now that our children are grown, we are blessed to attend Mass with our grandson. It's a special parish, and we feel blessed to be a part of it. - **Rich E.**

When we arrived, Bo first noticed what he called 'a trophy' in the middle of the altar. We all learned it was an ornate vessel called a monstrance, which displays the body of Christ and its significance as something extraordinary. Bo also commented about how the stillness of the evening reminded him of when his class takes a mindful moment. Again, the realization of the importance of spending quiet time with the Lord. - **Bo K. and family, Grade 1, after attending an Evening Prayer Service**

Every gathering is a reminder of the presence of Jesus in the midst of our friends, family, and neighbors. I especially love to sing God's praises each week with the choir, accompanied by violin and other instruments. Our worship is wonderful. - **Peter C.**



**Corpus Christi procession
June 2023**

The **Corpus Christi procession** this year was a tremendous experience. Our incredible procession walked through town to the green, singing joyously the whole way. As Father held up the monstrance before the fountain, hundreds of people stood and prayed reverently. I felt tears at the beautiful witness of faith and community. We were so grateful that our girls had a new and tangible experience of our faith. - **Sarah J.**

I have participated in the **Walking with Purpose** program for women for several years, first as a group member and later as a group leader. I have met many women seeking a closer relationship with God through this program. Whenever I participate in this and many other church-sponsored activities, I feel uplifted by others who believe as I do. - **Monica G.**

At SS. Isidore and Maria Parish, worship focuses on Him. Father Mark's homilies help us to do just that. Monthly socials after some Masses allow us to connect with many parishioners regardless of age, color, or nationality. - **Liz G.**

I am blessed to share my God-given talents through the **Music Ministry**. I cherish the many families my kids have befriended, especially the small group of dads who walk that narrow path together. If you haven't joined our parish, consider if the Holy Spirit is calling you to embolden your faith journey through our SS. Isidore and Maria community. - **Tim P.**

Upcoming at our Parish

Festival of Lessons and Carols: Fri., Jan. 5 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul Church

Solemn Celebration of Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament: Jan. 9, Feb. 19, Mar. 18, and May 7 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul Church

Hospitality Weekends: Join us at St. Paul Church after 4 p.m. Mass for wine & cheese or 11:15 a.m. Mass for a coffee social on any of the following weekends: Jan. 6/7, Feb. 3/4, Mar. 2/3, and May 4/5.

Holy Thursday Mass: Thurs., Mar. 28 at 6 p.m.
Good Friday Service: Fri., Mar. 29 at 3 p.m.
Easter Vigil Mass: Sat., Mar. 30 at 7 p.m.
Easter Masses: Sun., Mar. 31 at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:15 a.m.

Corpus Christi Procession: Sun., Jun. 2 from St. Paul Church following the 11:15 a.m. Mass.

Parish Mass Schedule

Weekend Mass Schedule: Sat. at 4 p.m., Sun. at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:15 a.m.

Daily Mass Schedule: Mon., Tues., Wed. at 7:30 a.m., and Fri. at 12:15 p.m.

Scan this QR code to stay current on what's happening at SS. Isidore and Maria Parish, or to register as a parishioner.

