



March 10, 2024 | Laetare Sunday

John F. Kennedy & The Houston Speech

In September 1960, the Democratic candidate for the Presidency, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, had what he and his advisors called a “Catholic Problem” that never seemed to go away. Despite famous interviews in *Life* magazine and regular statements in the press outlining an exceedingly solid wall of separation between church and state, Protestant and secular voices regularly issued thinly veiled warnings of the danger of a Catholic in the White House. Their concerns spanned the spectrum from hooded patriots burning crosses in the night to highly respected public intellectuals like Union Theological Seminary’s Reinhold Niebuhr, the most respected Protestant theologian in mid-twentieth century America. Niebuhr’s critique (typically brilliant) was not that Kennedy was a Catholic, but rather that he was a bad Catholic, not really understanding his own faith tradition. The only previous Catholic candidate to receive his party’s nomination for that office—New York State’s “wet” governor, Al Smith—had lost the 1928 presidential election by the largest margin of votes up to that time, and officials of both major parties viewed the chances of any Catholic candidate winning a presidential election as very thin after the 1928 debacle. In the fall of 1960, Kennedy seemed headed for a similar loss at the polls, and the secular press made much of the fears of Protestant voters across the spectrum in allowing a Catholic to function as the “high priest” of America’s civil religion.



President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy visit St. Ignatius on February 10, 1963.

It was, therefore, with a heavy heart, that Kennedy accepted the invitation to address the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, 300 evangelical Protestant clergymen strong, gathered in the ballroom of Houston’s Rice Hotel two months before the election. In the course of that address—now generally known as the “Houston Speech”—JFK outlined what many at the time (and since) considered a problematic “privatization” of religious belief for public officials: “I want a president whose religious beliefs are his own private affair,” Kennedy asserted before the assembled ministers, “a president for whom no religious belief or commitment takes precedence over his oath to uphold the Constitution.” Catholic journals at the time voiced surprise and confusion about the Houston Speech. The Jesuit editor of *America*, in his editorial the week after the address, noted that “Mr. Kennedy can’t really believe that: no religious person can believe that.”

Kennedy’s address is credited with winning him the presidency, but pundits at the time and since (both Catholic and Protestant) have questioned the price of that win: While the Houston Speech did seem to convince enough voters that Kennedy’s Catholicism posed no threat to the separation of church and state to elect him, many scholars—especially Catholic historians—have raised troubling question of whether JFK’s speech made the road to the presidency a much more difficult task for Catholic politicians. Many Catholic bishops at the time, most publicly New York Cardinal Francis Spellman, supported the Republic candidate, Richard Nixon, and Catholic bishops since have tended to be quite critical of Catholic candidates who—like JFK—have erected a wall between their personal faith and their public policy commitments.

— Mark Massa, S.J.

Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life & Professor of Theology at Boston College

Join us on Monday, March 11th at 7 PM in Wallace Hall, as Fr. Massa presents “John F. Kennedy, The Houston Speech, and Catholic Citizenship,” which will explore the impact of John F. Kennedy’s ‘Houston Speech’ on the Catholic presidential candidates who followed him.

For more information, see page 3.

This Week at a Glance

MONDAY, MARCH 11th

Lecture | John F. Kennedy, The Houston Speech,
and Catholic Citizenship.

7 PM. Wallace Hall.

Details on page 3.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12th

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

6 PM. Church.

Tuesday Night Book Group |
Discovering Our Home in the Trinity.
7 PM. Zoom.

*To register and receive the Zoom link for this
discussion series, please email "Trinity" to
TuesdayNightBookGroup@gmail.com.*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13th

Bible Study | "Why Have You Forsaken Me?"

Lent with the Psalms.

7 PM. Parish House & Zoom.

To RSVP, email brianbpinter@protonmail.com.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Meeting.

7 PM. Parish House.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14th

Ignatian Social Justice Meeting.

7 PM. Parish House.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15th

Fifth Annual Iftar Dinner.

7 PM. Wallace Hall.

Details on page 3.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16th

Stations of the Cross.

9 AM. Church.

Back to Basics 2.0: What It Means to Be Catholic

Through April, the priests of the parish will offer a chance to learn more about what it means to be Catholic.

RELIGIOUS ORDERS OF THE CHURCH

Monday, March 18th at 7 PM in Wallace Hall

Fr. James Casciotti, S.J.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL ENCYCLICALS

Monday, April 15th at 7 PM in Wallace Hall

Fr. Dennis Yesalonia, S.J.

Lenten Food Drive

*Benefiting the Church of the Ascension
on the Upper West Side*

Through **Sunday, March 10th**, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Interparish Religious Education Program are collecting canned goods and non-perishable items to help our neighbors in need during this Lenten season. Your contribution matters!

Requested Donation Items:

Canned: beans, corn, green beans, yams, tomatoes, tomato sauce, other canned fruit & vegetables, chili, soup, tuna, condensed milk

Boxed/Bags: rice, pasta, dried beans, cereal, shelf-stable milk

Other: Peanut butter, spices/seasonings, olive oil in plastic bottles or cans

No glass bottles.

Items may be dropped off daily at the Parish House.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul extends a huge thank you and God bless you to everyone who made our Lenten Blood Drive last Sunday, February 25th, a tremendous success!

We broke all our prior Blood Drive records—and the New York Blood Center reports that 171 lives will be saved!

Many thanks and kudos to our blood donors, volunteers, hospitality ministers, IREP student volunteers, the Facilities team, and everyone at St. Ignatius involved in promoting and assisting the Drive.

And special thanks to all of you who waited patiently, some for hours, to donate blood due to the overwhelming response. We plan to have more staff and volunteers to handle larger numbers and avoid long waits in the future!

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul welcomes all St. Ignatius parishioners to volunteer with us—and join us at our meetings for prayer, reflection, spiritual growth, fellowship, and community service—during Lent and year-round. All levels of involvement are appreciated.

Our regular meetings take place every other Wednesday at 7 PM in the Parish House. Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 13th—and all are welcome!

**For more information, please contact us at
svdpmembership980@gmail.com.**

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook at *stignatiusnyc*.

Lectures at St. Ignatius

John F. Kennedy, The Houston Speech, and Catholic Citizenship

Monday, March 11th at 7 PM
Wallace Hall

PRESENTER

Mark Massa, S.J.

Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, and Professor of Theology at Boston College

John F. Kennedy's 'Houston Speech' before 300 Protestant clergymen in 1960 supposedly won him the presidency. Was that good news for the Catholic presidential candidates who came after him?

ABOUT THE PRESENTER



Mark Massa, S.J., is director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life and Professor of Theology at Boston College. From 2010 to 2016, he served as the first dean of the School of Theology and Ministry at BC. He is the author of seven books; Oxford University Press will publish his eighth book this year, entitled *Catholic Fundamentalism in America*.

Ignatian Interfaith Ministry

Fifth Annual Iftar Dinner

Friday, March 15th at 6:20 PM in Wallace Hall

Join us for "Living Faith: Navigating the Intersection of Faith and Work as a Young Professional."

PRESENTERS

- **Imam Gazi Aga** | Director, North East Islamic Community Center
- **Kerime Akoglu** | Litigator, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.

Adam Llorens | Producer, NFL Network

MODERATOR: Simone Vinocour
Chair, Ignatian Interfaith Ministry

Our annual Iftar dinner will also include live traditional Sufi music by the group Amir Vahab and Ensemble.

While there is no charge, advance registration is required. Families are welcome.

To RSVP, email ignatianinterfaithministry@gmail.com by Monday, March 11th.

Girl Scout Cookie Sale

Sunday, March 17th, following the 11 AM Masses
Church & Wallace Hall

Girl Scouts will be hosting a Cookie Booth Sale in the Narthex and Wallace Hall after the 11 AM Masses.

Second Annual Parish Art Show

Thursday, June 20th to Saturday, June 22nd
Wallace Hall

Are you ready to unleash your inner Picasso or Ansel Adams and dazzle the parish community with your artistic flair? Then, grab your pencils, your paintbrushes, or your finest lens, for it's your time to shine. Be they masterpieces or happy accidents, we invite you to submit your work to our second annual Parish Art Show.

Any non-digital media can be submitted: photographs, paintings, drawings, pastels, watercolors, etchings, linocuts, lithographs, collages, mixed media, sculpture. All artists aged 18 and over are invited to submit.

You can submit up to two pieces (more if we have the space). All submissions (except sculptures) must be framed and ready to hang. Maximum size is limited to 3 feet by 3 feet; sculptures are limited to 25 pounds.

Pre-registration is required. **Sign up online at ignatius.nyc/artshowreg.** *The last day to register is Thursday, May 9th.* Don't miss out!

Submissions are to be dropped off at the Parish House on Thursday, June 13th (6 PM to 8 PM), Friday, June 14th (2 PM to 4 PM), and Saturday, June 15th (9 AM to 11 AM).

You can offer the work for sale or display it. If your work is sold, all sale proceeds will go to the parish. All art must be family-friendly.

The Art Show will open in Wallace Hall on Thursday, June 20th, at 6:30 PM. The art will remain on display until Saturday, June 22nd, at 2:30 PM.

If you would like more information, please email silartshow@gmail.com.

Bread for the World 2024 Offering of Letters

Saturday, March 9th & Sunday, March 10th
Church

Please join us in signing letters to our Senators and Representatives after all Masses on **Saturday and Sunday, March 9th and 10th**, to support Bread for the World's 2024 campaign to continue policies that build healthy, equitable, and sustainable food systems. The farm bill is our nation's most important national food system legislation.

Our faith calls us to stand alongside impacted people in our community and around the world. Let us work together to ensure U.S. policies assist people to move out of poverty and feed their families in the United States and worldwide.

CHURCH OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA

980 Park Avenue at 84th Street • New York, New York 10028

(212) 288-3588 • Fax: (212) 734-3671 • ignatius.nyc

PARISH STAFF

Pastor

Rev. Dennis J. Yesalonia, S.J.

Associate Pastors

Rev. Mark C. Hallinan, S.J.

Rev. Michael P. Hilbert, S.J.

Senior Priest

Rev. William J. Bergen, S.J.

Assisting Priest

Rev. James Martin, S.J.

In Residence

Rev. James A. Casciotti, S.J.

Pastoral Associates

Kate Noonan Brian Pinter Jean Santopatre

Pastoral Assistant

Maureen Haley

Music Ministries

Daniel Beckwith Douglas Purcell
Robert Reuter Elizabeth Van Os
Michael Sheetz Christina Kay
Scott Warren, *Director*

Assistant to the Pastor

Rebecca Brucas

Administrative Assistant

Patricia Schneider

Director of Communications

Elizabeth O'Sullivan

Director of Facilities

Robert Cisternino

Facilities Coordinator

Caroline Fernandes

Treasurer

Fernando Castro

Weekday Masses (Monday – Friday)

8:30 AM, 12:10 PM, and 5:30 PM

Saturday: 8:30 AM

Masses for the Weekend of March 17th

Saturday Vigil 5:30 PM Fr. Bergen
Sunday: 8:00 AM Fr. Hilbert
9:30 AM Fr. Hilbert
Solemn 11:00 AM Fr. Casciotti
Wallace Hall Family 11:00 AM Fr. Yesalonia
7:30 PM Fr. Casciotti

Religious Education for Children

Ms. Kate Noonan, Director

(212) 288-3588 x609

noonank@saintignatiusloyola.org

Saint Ignatius Loyola School

Upper Campus

(First Grade through Eighth Grade)

Ms. Mary Larkin, Head of School

M.S. Ed. (Admin.), M.S. Ed. (Literacy)

48 East 84th Street

(212) 861-3820 | Fax: (212) 879-8248

Lower Campus

(PreK-3 through Kindergarten)

Ms. Mary Larkin, Head of School

240 East 84th Street

(212) 734-6427 | Fax: (212) 734-6972

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Sundays at the 9:30 AM Mass.

Confessions

4:30 PM Saturday or by appointment.

Baptisms

Please contact Maureen Haley at

baptisms@saintignatiusloyola.org

to arrange for a Baptism and

the preparation given prior to Baptism.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

Contact Maureen Fullam, M.A.,

Director, at the Parish House.

Marriages

The Bride or Groom should contact

Maureen Haley at

weddings@saintignatiusloyola.org

to begin preparation for Marriage,

normally one year in advance.

Visits to the Sick

Please contact the Parish House

between the hours of

9:00 AM and 9:00 PM.

Ignatian Young Adults (IYA)

For more information about our IYA

ministry, email Jean Santopatre at

santopatrej@saintignatiusloyola.org.

Announced Masses and Readings for the Week

Monday, March 11th

(Fourth Monday of Lent)

Isaiah 65:17-21 Psalm 30

John 4:43-54

8:30 MEM The Meehan Family

12:10 MEM Robert Delaney

5:30 MEM Steve Currier

Tuesday, March 12th

(Fourth Tuesday of Lent)

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12 Psalm 46

John 5:1-16

8:30 MEM Donato Montano

12:10 MEM Margaret & Peter
Voorhies

5:30 MEM Carmel Pastore

Wednesday, March 13th

(Fourth Wednesday of Lent)

Isaiah 49:8-15 Psalm 145

John 5:17-30

8:30 MEM John & Nora Reilly

12:10 MEM Braedon Gromek

5:30 MEM Donalda Cisternino

Thursday, March 14th

(Fourth Thursday of Lent)

Exodus 32:7-14 Psalm 106

John 5:31-47

8:30 MEM Charles O'Donnell

12:10 MEM Anna Mary Forte

5:30 MEM Living & Deceased
Members of the Wallace Family

Friday, March 15th

(Fourth Friday of Lent)

Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22 Psalm 34

John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

8:30 MEM Jack O'Leary

12:10 MEM George MacDonald

5:30 MEM Charles Denihan

Saturday, March 16th

(Fourth Saturday of Lent)

Jeremiah 11:18-20 Psalm 7

John 7:40-53

8:30 ANN Charles Denihan

Sunday, March 17th

(Fifth Sunday of Lent)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm 51

Hebrews 5:7-9 John 12:20-33