ALL ARE WELCOME!

Whatever your present status in the Catholic Church, whatever your current family or marital situation, whatever your past or present religious affiliation, whatever your personal history, age, background, race or color, you are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved and respected at the Parish Family of St. Anthony of Padua.

There are no Strangers at St. Anthony's - Only Friends We Haven’t Met

St. Anthony of Padua Worship Site
436 Port Reading Ave., Port Reading, NJ
732-634-1403 Fax: 732-602-0119

The Holy Eucharist
Saturday, Evening: 4:00 PM
Sunday, 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM & 11:30 AM
Daily: Tuesday & Wednesday: 7:30 AM
Thursday: 7:00 PM
Tuesday—Novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal following 7:30 AM Mass
Thursday—Novena to St. Anthony following the 7:00PM Mass
Liturgy of the Hours - Prayed 20 minutes before Daily Mass

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
Thursday Evening: 6:30 PM
Saturday: 3:15 PM

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Worship Site
280 Amboy Ave. (Rt.35), Woodbridge, NJ

The Holy Eucharist
Saturday, Evening: 5:30 PM
Sunday, 9:30 AM Rosary prayed in Hungarian before Mass.
Divine Mercy Chaplet prayed after Mass.
Daily: Monday, Friday & Saturday: 8:00 AM

First Friday of the Month
Devotions to the Sacred Heart Following the 8:00 AM Mass
First Saturday of the Month
Devotions to Mary following Mass
Liturgies of the Hours - Prayed 20 minutes before Daily Mass

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
Saturday: 4:45 PM

Our Prayer for the week...This week, the Season of Winter begins so a prayer in the theme of winter is appropriate.

3rd Sunday of Advent

Beauty of Winter

God of creation,
Thank you for the beauty of winter -
For snow, icy window panes,
evergreen trees, warm coats, sledding,
And hot cocoa.

Let us enjoy Your creation in all its glory, this winter and always.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer Time with Father Smith for the people of the parish and the needs of the parish
Wednesday, December 20th, 2017
6:00PM
St. Anthony of Padua Worship Site
Sunday, December 24

Friday, December 22nd
8:00AM Respect for Life in All Its Stages

Saturday, December 23rd
8:00AM Brandon Baret
req. by Allan & Cora Alcobendas
5:30PM Lauro Francisco Sedlmayer [Birthday]
req. by his son, Father Lauro Sedlmayer

Sunday, December 24th

4th Sunday of Advent
9:30AM Rowena Joyce Bernabe [Living Intention: Health]
req. by Bernabe Family

CHRISTMAS VIGIL
5:30PM People of the Parish Family

RESPONSORIAL PSALM IN HUNGARIAN FOR
DECEMBER 17, 2017 — THE 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LELKEM UJJONGVA HIRDETI ISTENEMNEK DICSOSEGET.

If you have requested a Mass to be celebrated you have the right to present the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ during that particular celebration of Mass. If you would like to fulfill this responsibility, please inform one of the Ministers of Hospitality (Ushers) before Mass. If you don’t inform the Ministers of Hospitality, they will ask another person to fulfill that responsibility.

OPLATKI WAFERS
Oplatki Bread Wafers for Christmas are available at the Parish Office. The donation is $2.00 per package. The custom to break this wafer at your Christmas Eve or Christmas dinner table and wish each member of your family “A Blessed Christmas with Love, Joy, Peace and Happiness in the New Year” is a beautiful and meaningful observance.

Parish Office Hours
Monday 8:30AM—3:30PM
Tuesday 10:00AM—3:30PM
Wednesday 8:30AM—3:30PM
Thursday 8:30AM—5:30PM; 6:30PM—9:00PM
Office is CLOSED on Fridays
Closed for lunch each day at 12:45PM—1:30PM

www.saintanthonypadua.org
We’re on FACEBOOK, come and check us out!

EMAIL:
Office: info.StAnthony1@gmail.com
Religious Education: religioused.StAnthony1@gmail.com
Bulletin: bulletin.stanthony@gmail.com
Study Hall: studyhalloffice@gmail.com or studyhalldirector@gmail.com
The Parish Family of St. Anthony of Padua
Mission Statement

The Parish Family of St. Anthony of Padua
Is a diverse Community of Faith
Formed in July 2012 by the merging of
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Woodbridge (est. 1920)
with St. Anthony of Padua Church, Port Reading (est. 1904).
We proclaim the “Good News” of Jesus Christ
And the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church.

We are committed to maintaining worship as a
Powerful experience of the presence of God through
Word, Sacrament, Music and Community.
We have a passion for Social Justice
and our duties toward all people.

We enrich the Faith of those in need through a
variety of ministries.
All are Welcome.

We strive to be a beacon of Faith, Hope and Love
while honoring God’s Presence in every person.

Eucharistic Adoration
….an HOUR WITH JESUS

We are blessed to have Eucharistic Adoration at
St. Anthony of Padua every Thursday from 2:00PM to
9:00PM. The Divine Mercy Chaplet and Rosary are prayed
at 3:00PM. Please consider joining us for the hour or
even a half-hour. All are welcome!

Votive candles burn constantly as a form of prayer and
adoration. The candles burning this weekend are dedicated
at St. Anthony of Padua Worship Site

Tabernacle
In Loving Memory of our dear parents, Maria & Carmen
req. by Albina & Victor D’Alessio

In Loving Memory of Joseph Cunningham
req. by his wife, Angela, children, grandchildren &
great-grand children

In Loving Memory of Patricia Ercolino
req. by George & MaryAnn

Good Shepherd
In Loving Memory of Gordon & Ann Ur, John Patrick & Owen
req. by their family

In Loving Memory of Danielle (D’Orsi) & Brian Caynor
req. by Richie & Adrienne

Cross of San Dominico
God’s Healing for Patricia Zellner

Memorial Wall
In Loving Memory of my beloved son, Gerard Muller on his
2nd Anniversary in Heaven
req. by Marie Muller

G.O.D.’s Little Helpers
St. Anthony’s Pre-school Program for 3, 4 and 5
year olds (potty trained, of course). We meet on
Sunday mornings at 9:30AM to 10:30AM. There is NO
FEE! Registration forms are available on the desk in the
narthex and the parish office. Have questions please call
Jackie at the parish office 732-634-1403.

Holy Family Prayer Group of Our
Lady of Mt. Carmel
The Holy Family Prayer Group invites you to join
them at their Prayer meeting each Friday at 8:00PM in
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church basement. Each First
Friday they welcome you to join them in the celebration
of Mass at 8:00PM. Blessing for those celebrating the
month of their birth after Mass. (Rosary recited 7:30PM.)

Congratulations
St. Nicholas Day Raffle
Winners

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<tr>
<td>#1367</td>
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Don’t Be Alone This Christmas... come meet your neighbors!!!

ALL ARE WELCOME (Families, Couples, Singles)
TO SHARE DINNER WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS AND A LARGE PORTION OF FRIENDSHIP AT:

St. Anthony of Padua Church—
Father Milos Parish Hall
436 Port Reading Avenue, Port Reading

DATE: Monday, December 25, 2017
TIME: 1:30pm-3:30pm

There is NO CHARGE for the dinner, all are most welcome, however, a call by Monday, December 18th would be appreciated to properly plan the meals.

PLEASE CALL: ST. ANTHONY’S CHURCH 732-634-1419 LEAVE A MESSAGE AND SOMEONE WILL GET BACK TO YOU

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION MAY BE AVAILABLE.
(If you need transportation, please let us know no later than this Monday, December 18th)

CHRISTMAS FRIENDSHIP DINNER

Preparations are now underway for our 26th annual CHRISTMAS FRIENDSHIP DINNER. Help is needed in so many ways – before the event – the day of the event – and after the event.

For those not familiar with the ministry, a festive, holiday dinner with all the trimmings is held on Christmas Day for all whom pre-register and wish to attend the dinner. Let us remember, many people may be alone, may be having temporary financial difficulties, may be estranged from family or who might not be physically capable of preparing a meal.

“Many Hands Make Light Work” — Please call 732-634-1419 if you’d like to volunteer, and someone will get back to you in a few days. Thank you.

“Setting the Table” – We will be setting up the hall for the dinner on Friday, December 22nd at 4:00PM. Won’t you lend a hand?

What would a feast be without a delicious dessert? Desserts are needed. If you’d like to donate a dessert, it would be greatly appreciated. They can be dropped off in Fr. Milos Hall beginning Thursday, December 21st.
Stewardship: God’s Plan for Giving

Offertory for December 3, 2017 $6,096.00
Retirement Religious $1,687.00
Immaculate Conception $1,503.00
Offertory for December 10, 2017 $4,182.00

Tis the season...
for early submission of our bulletins to our publisher. Contributions will be published as available at the time each bulletin is submitted.

“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. “Rejoice always” means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. “Pray constantly” means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. “Give thanks in all circumstances” means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations.

COUNTING TEAMS

SUNDAY, December 17th
Team #5 L. Palasitis, R. Sorbanelli

TUESDAY, December 26th
Team # SPECIAL TEAM

The Week at St. Anthony of Padua Worship Site Ahead

Monday, December 18th
Study Hall 6:30AM Fr. Milos Hall
Bingo (doors open 10:30am) 12:30PM Fr. Milos Hall
Holy Name Society Meeting 7:00PM Fr. Milos Hall

Tuesday, December 19th
Study Hall 6:30AM Fr. Milos Hall
Children’s Choir Rehearsal 4:30PM Church
Adult Choir Rehearsal 6:30PM Church
AA 7:30PM Fr. Milos Hall

Wednesday December 20th
Study Hall 6:30AM Fr. Milos Hall
Prayer Time w/ Fr. Smith 6:00PM Chapel
1st Penance—Level 1 6:30PM Fr. Milos Hall
1st Communion—Level 2 6:30PM Fr. Milos Hall

Thursday, December 21st Parish Office Closes 12:30PM
Study Hall 6:30AM Fr. Milos Hall
Eucharistic Adoration 2:00PM Chapel
Chaplet / Rosary 3:00PM Chapel
Confessions 6:30PM Church
Confessions 7:30PM Church
AA 8:00PM Fr. Milos Hall

Friday, December 22nd
Study Hall 6:30AM Fr. Milos Hall
Christmas Dinner Set-Up 4:00PM Fr. Milos Hall

Saturday, December 23rd
Confessions 10:00AM Church
Confessions 3:15PM Church

Please note the Study Hall Program will be closed Monday, December 25th. Reopening on Tuesday, January 2, 2018.

The Week at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Worship Site Ahead

Friday, December 22nd
Mass / Christmas Novena 8:00AM Church
Holy Family Prayer Group 8:00PM Church Basement

Saturday, December 23rd
Mass / Christmas Novena 8:00AM Church
Confessions 4:45PM Church

RING IN THE NEW YEAR!

FRIDAY, Dec. 22nd through MONDAY, Dec. 31st
MONDAY, December 18th 12:30PM
Bingo Team #1 Captain: R. Simeone
Caller – M. Oddo
Kitchen - J. Ballance, D. Bortner, B. Walliser

FRIDAY, December 22nd NO BINGO

MONDAY, January 1st 2:00PM
Captain – R. Sorbanelli
Caller – M. Oddo
Kitchen Team T.B.A.

Volunteers are needed….Please call the parish office if you’re able to help out.

Volunteers are needed….Please call the parish office if you’re able to help out.

Let us join with Pope Francis I in his Universal Intention for December, 2017: The Elderly. That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.

**Liturgical Minister Schedule**

**ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA WORSHIP SITE**

**ALTAR SERVERS**
- **Saturday** 12/23/17
  - 4:00PM Volunteer Needed
- **Sunday** 12/24/17
  - 8:00AM Volunteer Needed
  - 9:30AM K. Martino

**EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS**
- **Homebound Ministers** 12/23/17—12/24/17 T..B.A.
  - **Saturday** 12/23/17
    - 4:00PM L. Casey, C. Marney, H. Pagliuca
  - **Sunday** 12/24/17
    - 8:00AM J. & M. Balanlayos, S. Gadomski
    - 9:30AM K. & M. Mitterando, V. Reuben

**READERS**
- **Saturday** 12/23/17
  - 4:00PM R. McNamara
- **Sunday** 12/24/17
  - 8:00AM M. Russo
  - 9:30AM S. Martino

*STEP UP...When you come for Mass if you notice that there is no altar server, please volunteer to substitute. Just speak to Fr. Smith. *Extra Albs are available.

**OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL WORSHIP SITE**

**ALTAR SERVERS**
- **Saturday** 12/23/17
  - 5:30PM C. Torres
- **Sunday** 12/24/17
  - 9:30AM Volunteer Needed

**EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS**
- **Saturday** 12/23/17
  - 5:30PM J. Dizon, M. Torres
- **Sunday** 12/24/17
  - 9:30AM M. Amaya, C. Gumapac

**READERS**
- **Saturday** 12/23/17
  - 5:30PM C. Dizon
- **Sunday** 12/24/17
  - 9:30AM M. Poos

**CHRISTMAS**
- **Vigil** 12/24/17
  - 5:30PM J. Dizon, M. Torres
- **Christmas** 12/25/17
  - 9:30AM B. Perlas, V. Rabago

Please refer the Christmas schedule that was mailed and emailed directly to you. Thank you and God Bless!
CATHOLIC CHARITIES ~ DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

Please consider supporting our local poverty relief services by donating gently used clothing, shoes, household items and small appliances to Catholic Charities - Diocese of Metuchen. Clearly marked donation boxes are available in more than 30 locations throughout our four-county diocese. The nearest location to St. Anthony’s is James, Grenville St., Woodbridge. For a complete list of drop-off locations, visit http://www.ccdom.org/how-you-can-help/clothing-donation-drop-boxes.

If you have an item that is too big to fit in a donation box, call 877-343-3651 to arrange for a free pick up at your home.

Marriage Encounter Weekend
January 26th—28th, 2018

Celebrate your marriage and its many blessings by attending a Marriage Encounter Weekend. A Marriage Encounter weekend gives you the time and tools to revitalize romance, deepen communication and nourish the spirituality in your marriage.

Space is limited. Early registration is advisable.

For cost and location, visit www.aweekendforyourmarriage.org or call (732) 904-9636

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS SERVICES

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Metuchen is offering Counseling and Wellness Services. If you or someone you know needs counseling or is impacted by addiction, we can help. Individual and family therapy for children and adults is available.

For an appointment, call (800) 655-9491.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS at the BARRON ARTS CENTER

27TH Annual Holiday Model Train Show
Through December 30th (CLOSED DECEMBER 25th)

Featuring the set-up and design of Mike Gelesky. Free admission; donations welcome. Available for school or group viewing. Call 732-634-0413.

YEAR END DAY OF PRAYER
 Spend this last day of the year reflecting on the many gifts God has bestowed on you. Day begins and ends with communal prayer. Bring bag lunch. Sunday, December 31st, 2017 10:00am—3:00pm ($20-$30 as you are able)

ITALIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF OCEAN (IAATO)

50 / 50 RAFFLE
To benefit scholarship and youth programs

Drawing February 24, 2018 at 10:00pm at IAATO Annual Dinner Dance.

Only $50.00 PER TICKET
Only 1000 TICKETS TO BE SOLD /12 CHANCES TO WIN

Grand prize—$10,000 * (40%)
2nd prize—$5,000 * (20%)  10—$1,000 Prizes *(4% each)

For Tickets pick up a flyer from the desk at the entrance of St. Anthony of Padua or Our Lady of Mt. Camel worship sites.

DIOCESAN EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Commencing in the new year, Eucharistic Adoration will be held in the chapel at the St. John Neumann Pastoral Center, Piscataway. Volunteer adorers and intercessors are needed Monday through Friday during business hours to pray for the intentions of the diocese. For information or to volunteer, call Laura at 732-529-7932 or email her at the following: evangelization@diometuchen.org.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES ~ DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

Please consider supporting our local poverty relief services by donating gently used clothing, shoes, household items and small appliances to Catholic Charities-Diocese of Metuchen.

For an appointment, call (800) 655-9491.

YEAR END DAY OF PRAYER

Spent this last day of the year reflecting on the many gifts God has bestowed on you. Day begins and ends with communal prayer. Bring bag lunch. Sunday, December 31st, 2017 10:00am—3:00pm ($20-$30 as you are able)

HISTORICAL OF OUR DIOCESE’S BEGINNINGS

On November 19th, 2016, the Diocese of Metuchen celebrated the 35th Anniversary of its founding by Pope St. John Paul II. Msgr. John Szymanski, who served then-Bishop McCarrick as chancellor and, later, as vicar general in the early years of the Diocese, has written a history of how the Diocese came to be established and a chronicle of its first five years. Entitled, The Lighting of the Watch Fires, it is available for purchase for $25. Send your check to: Rev. Msgr. John B. Szymanski, The Maria Regina Residence, 5 Dellwood Lane, Somerset, NJ 08873.
Donations are tax deductible. Free pick up Middlesex, Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren counties.

justiceforimmigrants.org/action alert

 Dresden, New Jersey is looking for volunteers, both men and women to participate in on-to-one activities and become a mentor to the youth of Middlesex County and Franklin Township.

Do you:
- Have a minimum of three hours a week to offer a child?
- Like having fun?
- Want to make a difference in a child’s life?
- Enjoy being a positive role model?

Then call Jeanette Cullen at 732-738-1323 or email her at jeullen@ccdom.org, for more information.

Are you suffering after an Abortion? Help is available!

If you or someone you know is suffering after an abortion, confidential, non-judgmental help is available! Experience God’s merciful love and begin the journey of healing:

Call Project Rachel
local toll-free helpline number: 877-877-4300 or visit HopeAfterAbortion.org.

Spanish-speakers may visit EsperanzaPosaborto.org; call Sisters of Life at 866-575-0075; or email: hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org

Action Alert to Support DREAM Act of 2017

The Dream Act of 2017 (S. 1615 / H.R. 3440) was recently introduced in Congress as a bipartisan effort. The bills are intended to protect immigrant youth who entered the United States as children and know America as their only home. The bills offer qualifying immigrant youth “conditional permanent resident status” and a path to full lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship. These bills would protect numerous youth, including the over 780,000 individuals who received temporary relief from deportation and employment eligibility through the Department of Homeland Security’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

The young people S. 1615 / H.R. 3400 seeks to protect are academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes and communities. As Catholics, we have long supported DREAMers as we believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, especially that of our children.

To make your voice heard visit: https://justiceforimmigrants.org/action-alerts/action-alert-support-dream-act-2017/

Open Your Heart and Home to a Foster Child

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen is seeking loving families to foster children of all ages, who have been abused, neglected or have had multiple out of home placements, through its Treatment Family Homes Program, contracted by New Jersey’s Department of Children and Families.

The goal for the children in this program is to leave foster care and achieve permanency through reunification with their families, adoption, or independent living.

Catholic Charities provides these resilient children with individual and family therapy, assistance with educational and medical needs, and independent living skills to help them reach their full potential.

Applicants must have adequate space for a child and complete a home study which includes background checks, references, interviews, and a home inspection. All Catholic Charities licensed families receive initial and ongoing specialized training. 24 hour emergency access to staff, respite services, monthly reimbursement for the child’s expenses and support from experienced families.

For more information about the program, please visit www.cccdm.org or contact Miguelina Nunez at 866-247-HOME (4663) or at mnunez@ccdom.org.

24 HOUR HOT LINE

Our Diocesan Office for Persons with Disabilities has a 24 hour prayer line for those who desire prayer for special needs. If you, a family member or friend would like to be remembered in prayer for a temporary or permanent illness, please call us and leave a detailed message at 732-765-6431 or email our office: catholicswithdisabilities@gmail.com

Our Diocesan Office for Persons with Disabilities has a Facebook page that provides daily updates with short inspirational reflections for people with disabilities, family members and caregivers. The site also provides endless resources for those with physical, emotional, cognitive, visual, auditory and other special challenges. To access our Facebook page (even if you are not a member of Facebook), type the following into your search engine: Diocese of Metuchen Office for Persons with Disabilities.

THE COMMUNITY HOUSE AT ST. THOMAS

"Community House at St. Thomas, in Old Bridge NJ, is a program managed by Catholic Charities and provides affordable, accessible housing for adults of very low income who have physical disabilities.

Up to 8 physically challenged adults live together as a group, functioning to their individual level of independence, and with professional case management services provided.

If you or someone you know is in need of this type of housing, please call Susan at 732-251-0022 or go to www.communityhouse-saintthomas.org for information. We look forward to hearing from you.
Please Support A3452/S2026, the NJ Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act

There is substantial medical evidence that babies in the womb feel pain at a very early stage of gestation. Thanks to advances in medicine, babies as young as 20 weeks post-fertilization can survive and thrive with appropriate care and treatment. Experts in the field of Maternal-Fetal medicine routinely administer pain medication as standard medical practice when performing fetal surgery because they recognize these babies as patients.

The NJ Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (A3452/S2026) will protect babies in the womb at 20 weeks and older who are capable of feeling pain and ensure that babies born alive during an abortion will be given the same proper lifesaving medical care given to premature infants.

We are happy to report that A3452/S2026, the NJ Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act has been introduced in the NJ Legislature. We thank the sponsors of this bill for wanting to protect babies in the womb and the lives of women. This bill is modeled after H.R. 36, the Federal bill by the same name. Passing this legislation is part of the 2020 Project, a collaborative effort by pro-life groups in NJ to protect babies in the womb who are capable of feeling pain at 20 weeks gestation.

Take Action Now!

◊ Pray for the protection of babies in the womb and their families.
◊ Contact your NJ State Senator and Assembly Members and ask them to support A3452/S2026, the “Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.”

To find your NJ State Senator and two Stat Representatives by district/town, visit:
http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/districts/municipalities.asp.
For information on this initiative or to obtain a car magnet or sticker, please visit www.babiesinthewombfeelpain.com.

NJ CATHOLIC ADVANCE DIRECTIVES FOR HEALTH CARE FORM

The New Jersey Catholic Conference (NJCC) Advance Directives for Health Care forms are available by contacting the Respect Life Office at 732-562-1990 ext. 1629 or 1543. An English of Spanish copy can also be downloaded from the NJCC website:
http://www.njccatholic.org/content/respect_life/living_will.php

In addition, A Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decisions is a resource made available by the National Catholic Bioethics Center. This document provides a clear explanation of the Church’s teaching on end-of-life care, including advance directives and physician assisted suicide. Individual copies of this guide can be ordered and downloaded online at www.ncbcenter.org by clicking on “publications.”

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT!

URGENT!

Take action to Oppose Assisted Suicide Bill—Update

New Jersey Senate bill S2474, the Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act, may be voted on in the next few weeks. An identical bill, A2451, passed the General Assembly on October 20th. If passed, this bill would allow physicians to prescribe drugs to end the lives of terminally ill patients who have been diagnosed with six months or less to live.

Doctor-assisted suicide is a direct threat to anyone viewed as a cost liability to an insurance company. In an era of cost containment and managed care, patients with lingering illnesses may be branded as an economic liability, and decisions to encourage death could be driven by cost.

The facts are clear - in California, Vermont and Oregon - states that have passed assisted suicide bills - insurance companies have denied individuals healthcare coverage but offered them low cost drugs to end their life. One such example is Stephanie Packer, a young mother of four from California. Stephanie was recently denied insurance coverage for her new chemotherapy treatment but suicide drugs were approved by her insurance with a nominal co-pay of $1.20.

Other reasons to oppose assisted suicide legislation include:

♦ A six-month prognosis for a terminal illness is not always accurate. Often, with treatment, patients survive well beyond their prognosis.

♦ S2474 would allow the death certificate to list the cause of death as the underlying terminal disease - not assisted suicide. The cause of death should be listed as self-administered drugs that ended life. Why not tell the truth?

♦ Legalized assisted suicide would send the wrong message to vulnerable groups such as our troubled youth and to our veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Studies have shown that in states where assisted suicide has been legalized, overall suicide rates increase.

♦ There is no requirement for a physician to be present when the patient takes the lethal prescription. In fact there is no supervision of the drugs once they leave the pharmacy. Our society should embrace what Pope John Paul II called “the way of love and true mercy” — a readiness to surround patients with love, support, and companionship, providing the assistance needed to ease their physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. Our duty is to assist those who are dying not kill them. Please contact your state Senators today and urge them to oppose S2474 by visiting: http://njcatholic.org/faith-in-action. Also, contact Governor Christie (609-292-6000) and ask him to veto the bill if it reaches his desk.