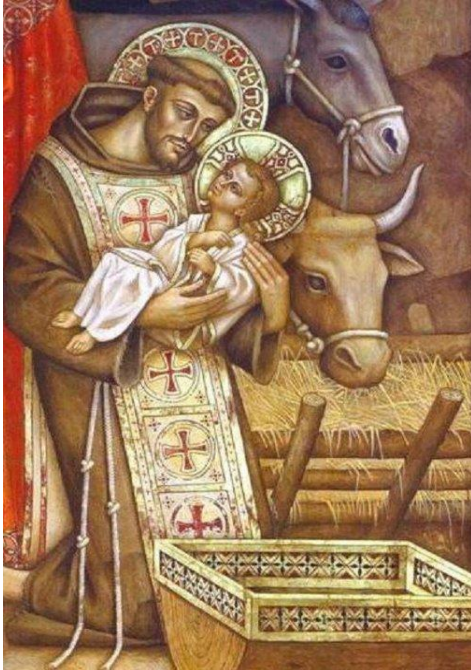


DECEMBER 20, 2015
Fourth Sunday of Advent
THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Mission Statement: St. Francis of Assisi is a Roman Catholic worshipping community, dedicated to ministering to our members and to the greater community in the image given to us by Jesus. This ministry is centered on the Sacraments and our Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity.



Pastor – Fr. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFMConv
St. Francis of Assisi, 120 Barron Avenue
Johnstown (Hockeyville), PA 15906
Rectory Phone – 814-539-1632
Activity Center – 814 – 539-3518
Fax: 814 – 539-5888

Email – sfassisich@atlanticbnn.net
Oremus Ministry (Prayer Chain) – 814-539-1632
Web Site: <http://www.stfrancisofassisijohnstown.com>

Daily Mass Schedule at St. Francis of Assisi
Mon / Wed / Thurs/ Fri. / Sat; 8:00AM; Tues. –6:30PM
First Friday 8:00AM and 5:30 PM

Confession – Tues., 6:00PM, Sat. 3:15 – 3:45PM
First Friday 5:00PM

Rosary Society – First Sunday of the Month – 2:00PM

Weekend Mass Schedule

– 4:00PM / Sunday – 7:30AM / 9:30AM

Parish Secretary – Carol Pisula

Office Hours – 9:00AM to 3:00PM – Mon. thru Thurs

Parish Council President – Ryan Woodruff

Finance Council President – Robert Bimeal

Cemetery Council President - William Heim

Music Minister – Gale Bala

Director of Religion Education – Carol Pisula

Saturday

Baptism – Parents are expected to be registered members of the Parish and to attend a class for new parents in preparation for the Baptism of their child. It is encouraged that this be done prior to the birth of the child. Please call the Rectory to make early arrangements.

Reconciliation – The Sacrament of God’s merciful love and compassion is celebrated Tues at 6 PM and Sat 3:15 PM at St. Francis of Assisi. Communal Penance Services - Advent and Lent.

Anointing of the Sick Communal – Celebration 2nd Sunday of Advent and 3rd Sunday of Lent.

Marriage In accordance with Diocesan directives, arrangements must be made at least 9 months before the marriage date. All couples are required to attend Diocesan sponsored Pre-Cana sessions and to participate in the FOCCUS inventory. Call the Rectory for information and schedules.

Christian Initiation (RCIA) – Those who are interested in becoming Catholic, as well as those who are interested in learning more about their Catholic Faith, may call the Parish office for more information.

Parish Membership – We are always happy to welcome new parishioners. You may register at the Parish office. Registration, the practice of stewardship (the regular use of envelopes) and regular participation in the Eucharist Indicates active membership and eligibility to act as a Godparent or Sponsor. Your stewardship of time, treasure and talent is essential for the common good and provides a stable income for the Parish, enabling us to prepare a budget.

Ministry to the Sick - If you or someone you know are unable to attend Mass and would like to receive the Sacrament of Penance or Holy Eucharist please contact the Parish Office to schedule a visit.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Thursday, Dec. 24 – 4:00PM

Friday, December 25 – Midnight, 8:00AM, 10:00AM

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

Thursday, December 31 – 4:00PM

Friday, January 1 – 7:30AM & 9:30AM

A GRATEFUL THANK YOU for the prayers and get well wishes as I recovered from recent surgery. May God Bless you for your kindness. *fr. Anthony Francis.*

CHILDREN OF THE PARISH are invited to participate in the 4:00PM Mass on Christmas Eve. They should dress in their “Sunday best” and be in the vestibule by 3:30PM in order to begin Mass on a timely basis. ***Rehearsal will take place on Sunday, December 20 in the Church immediately following the 9:30AM Mass.***

DECORATING of the Church for the Christmas Season will begin at 9:00AM on Wednesday, December 23. All help is greatly appreciated. Many hands make light work!

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR’S DAY ministry signup book is located in the vestibule. Please plan to take part in these liturgies celebrating the Birth of the Christ Child.

CHANGE FOR LIFE BABY BOTTLES can still be returned to the Church until this weekend. There is a bin in the vestibule of the Church for the bottles. Thank you for supporting the JPPI Youth Group and helping us to cover taking a student bus to the March for Life. Any additional proceeds will go to support one or more of the other Pro-Life organizations in town.

THANK YOU GOB CREW! We worked hard, played Christmas music and gabbed away as we packed 2600 gobs (second half of orders for Gob Trays). 13 bins of icing in 2 hours. That might be a record. All done beautifully! You are all professionals! Parishioners: if you want to spend a nice evening with some very nice people, watch the bulletin for the next packing session. Older members are welcome to come and sit and pack with our boxing ladies or if you have young legs you are invited to run trays to the tables. The more the merrier! Any questions, call Cindy at 539-3128. God Bless you all! *The Gob Committee.*

PARISH OFFICE will be closed Thursday, December 24, and Friday December 25.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES will NOT be held on Sunday, December 27.

WINNERS OF THE CANDY CANE CASH TICKET will be paid on a weekly, not daily basis. If you are a lucky winner, your check will be mailed within a week. Dec. 8 - #937 – Trish Brady; Dec. 9 - #035 – no winner; Dec. 10 - #032 – Courtney Leech; Dec. 11 - #562 – no winner; Dec. 12 – #645 – Donna Smith; Dec. 13 - #457 – Carol Gibson; Dec. 14 - #178 – Nick Masoryak. Thank you to all who participated in this fundraiser.

MARDI GRAS MADNESS is scheduled for Saturday, January 30, 2016. Tickets are now available after the Masses or by CALLING the Parish Office. Doors will open at 5:15PM and festivities will be held from 6:00PM until 11:00PM. Tickets are \$18.00 for adults, \$10.00 for ages 6 thru 17 and under five – free. There will be a \$5.00 cover charge for beer if desired. No outside beverages allowed. Cash bar available for wine and mixed drinks. Admission includes: Appetizers, turkey dinner, jambalaya rice, soda, and coffee.

SANCTUARY CANDLE will burn this week for Improved Health for Berniece Oleksak by Betty, Pansy, & Margaret Scott.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR PARISH DECEMBER 8 – Adults - \$536.01; Loose - \$213.95; Monthly - \$27.00; Candles - \$31.75; Oplatek - \$97.50; Misc. - \$110.00. Total Collection - \$1,048.21. Thank you for your continued generosity to the parish.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR PARISH LAST WEEKEND: Loose - \$424.22; Adults - \$2,051.01; Children - \$27.00; Monthly - \$170.00; Christmas - \$30.00; Flowers - \$47.00; Holy Day - \$82.00; Candles - \$82.25; St. Vincent de Paul - \$10.00; Religious Retirement - \$300.00; Oplatek - \$88.00. Total Collection - \$3,311.48. Thank you for your continued generosity to the parish.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONFESSION:

Sunday, December 20 - 5:00 PM @ St. Benedict Parish

Monday, December 21 - West End Penance Service 5:00 PM @ St. Therese

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, January 8, 2016 – Fish Fry – 11:00AM – 6:00PM

Sunday, January 24 – Volunteer Appreciation Party – Holy Hour – 3:00PM – 4:00PM, Dinner – 4:00PM

Saturday, January 30 – Mardi Gras Madness – 6:00PM – 11:00PM

Liturgical Reflection... On this final Sunday of Advent, we are invited to joyfully celebrate with Mary and Elizabeth. By God's mercy, the Eternal Word continues to grow in the womb of the Mother of Mercy. Elizabeth proclaims the Faith of endless generations, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." God's promise is fulfilled. Mercy is about to take flesh on the earth. There is joyful expectations we come to the conclusion of Advent time. 2015, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 S. Logan Blvd., Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Stewardship Reflection... May Mary's "yes" remind us of our unique roles in the Divine Plan. We come to do His will daily by responding with our own "yes."

Families and the Gospel... Lk 1:39-45 – Mary was excited with her first pregnancy and rushed to tell her cousin. Some consider children as a liability, a "mouth to feed" or an obstacle to a career. While Christmas is "for children" it is also "for adults to appreciate the gift children are to us."



St. Francis and the Christmas Creche... St. Francis of Assisi began the tradition of recreating the Nativity scene as a way of sharing the story of our Savior's birth with people who were not able to read the story. Here is the story as told by St. Bonaventure in his Life of St. Francis of Assisi: "It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the Nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made

glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the Nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His Name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem."

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

Bill Babik, Rose Blaschak, Geraldine Caddy, Jean Chase, Sister Carol Jean Czyrnik, Mary Davis, Joan Delusa, Stephen Fabina, LeAnn Golby, Alicia Junghans, Susan Keselyak, Kathryn Legat, Helen Malysko, Nilay Parekh (Bishop McCort High School), Carly Rice, Doug Rice, James Schuster, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobacky, Leona Sutt, Agnes Swarney, Jeanne Toth, Rose Trapanotto, Irene Virus, and Agnes Warhul.

SALUTE TO THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY AND A REMEMBRANCE IN OUR PRAYERS

May God bless these brave men and women who serve God and Country.

Ensign Adam Guaro, USCG; **Brandon Burdett**, USMC; **Master at Arms 2nd Class Izeke W. Pinkas**, Okinawa, Japan; **Lt. Col. Joshua P. Higgins**, US Army; **Petty Officer 1st Class Paul Rambish**, US Navy, Coronado Naval Base, San Diego; **Ret. SMSgt. Michael A. Caddy**, **Major Melinda Rovon Corallo**, Lakenheath Air Force Base, England; **HMC David Bakos**, US Navy; **PFC Lance Corporal Jacob Taylor**, USMC; **Private 1st Class Zack Taylor**, US Army; **Spc. Cody Holloway**, US Army, Afghanistan; **Trista L. Urban**, PFC, Army National Guard; **Jared N. Dull**, HM3, US Navy, Quantico, Va.; **Stefanie Kollar**, TSgt. Air Force, Hurlburt Field, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.; **Fr. Don Fullerton**, USS Enterprise, **Airman 1st Class Maxwell Schutte**, F. E. Warren, WY; **Sgt. Bryan Maxwell Porath**, **1st Lt Aaron Donahey**, US Army, Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas; **Petty Officer 1st Class Heather L. Dovala**, Bahrain.; **Spec Jarod Pisarchik**, Army National Guard; **Ens. Kara Yingling**, USS Higgins; **Lt. JG Shannon Yingling**; **Pvt Daniel Maslo**, Camp Geiger, NC; **Airman Devon Gilbert**, Tinker AFB, OK; **Senior Airman Daniel Christner**, USAF, 193rd Special Operations Wing; **Lt. Col Steven Thomas**, USAF, deploying to the Middle East; **2nd Lt. Colin Harrington**, US Army, Bethesda, MD; **2nd Lt. Ryan Powers**, USMC, Camp Lejeune, NC; **Anthony Rosage**, USAF, Lackland AFB, TX.

To add a name to our Salute to those in the Military, please call 539-1632. If a person is no longer serving on active or reserve duty, please call the Parish Office to remove his/her name.

COMMUNITY NEWS

PRO LIFE VIGIL Every Thursday from 4:00PM - 5:00PM we hold a prayer vigil across from the Franklin Street Planned Parenthood facility here in Johnstown. For more information call Gale at 539-0155.

READY FOR CHRISTMAS GIVING – two hard cover mystery novels by Bishop Joseph based on his Dinner Mysteries and experiences from his youth. Now available at Catholic Charities with all proceeds allocated for their ministry of assisting the needy. Please contact Catholic Charities – (814) 944-9388 for copies of *Flight of the Beetle* or *Heir Non-Apparent* - \$25.00 each (if to be picked up) or \$28.00 each (if to be mailed).

BIBLE STUDY to FOCUS on the YEAR OF MERCY – THEOLOGY of DIVINE MERCY – From the diary of a young Polish nun, a special devotion began spreading throughout the world in the 1930s. The message is nothing new, but it is a reminder of what the Church has always taught through Scripture and traditions: that God is merciful and forgiving and that we, too, must show mercy and forgiveness. But in the Divine Mercy devotion, the message takes on a powerful new focus, calling people to a deeper understanding

that God's love is unlimited and available to everyone – especially the greatest sinners. The message and devotion to Jesus as **The Divine Mercy** is based on the writings of St. Faustina Kowalska. The first session will include the viewing of the award winning film “Faustina: Apostle of Divine Mercy (Polish with English subtitles).” Deacon Michael will the Bible Study group in the discussion “The Theology of Divine Mercy” beginning Saturday, January 9 at 9:30AM – 11:30AM in the music room of St. Benedict School, 2306 Bedford St. The book that will be used is “*Divine Mercy in My Soul: Diary of St. Maris Faustina Kowalska.*” If you plan to attend this 6-week course, please contact Deacon Michael to register so that books can be ordered (814-288-3036 or email: Michael.russo@atlnaticbb.net).