

March 22, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Lent
**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.; Permanent Deacon
Bruce Becker**

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Parish Secretary – Carol Pisula

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

Parish Council President – Gary Woodruff – 248-1776

Finance Council President – Brian Mayko

Cemetery Council President - William Heim – 254- 2942

Director of Religious Education – Carol Pisula 539-1632

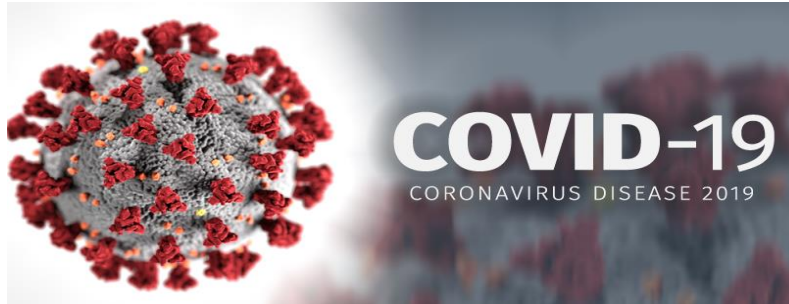
SYMBOLS OF THE PASSION OF JESUS

During the Fourth Week of Lent, our focus is on the SIGN that was placed above the head of Jesus. First thought to be a SIGN OF CONDEMNATION, but now thought to be a SIGN OF VICTORY. The SIGN stands as a continued testimony of God’s love for us. I.N.R.I. – Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. The first letters of the Latin inscription which, by Pilate’s order was placed on the Cross of Christ’s Crucifixion (John 19:19). The words JESUS NAZARENUS REX IUDAEORUM were taken from Pilate’s sentence. It was written in Latin, the language of the administration in Judea and also in Hebrew/Aramaic, the common language of the Jews of the days and Greek, the language of the intellectual community. Because of the irrevocability of a Roman sentence, this inscription stood as written against the protest of the Jews who wished to disclaim Christ’s Kingship (John 19:21). Thus, the inscription has become a lasting testimony of the Kingship of Jesus (Matthew 27:37). Above His Head they had put the charge against Him in writing:

THIS IS JESUS, KING OF THE JEWS (Mark 15:26). The inscription proclaiming His offense read: THE KING OF THE JEWS (Luke 23:28).

There was an inscription over His Head: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS (John 19:19-22). Pilate had an inscription place on the Cross which read: JESUS THE NAZOREAN, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This inscription in Hebrew, Latin and Greek was read by many of the Jews, since the place was near the city. The Chief Priests of the Jews tried to tell Pilate, “You should not have written the King of the Jews.” Write instead, “This Man claimed to be King of the Jews.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”





COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

In light of Bishop Mark's recent directives dated March 17, 2020, the following changes will be made to St. Francis of Assisi's Parish schedule.

The Church will be open on Saturdays from 3:00PM - 4:30PM and Sundays from 8:00AM – 10:00AM for private prayer. There will be NO public liturgies of any sort at the Church: weekday/weekend Masses, Holy Hours, Stations of the Cross until the COVID-19 crisis has passed. The whole purpose of these directives is to assist in the slowing of the spread of the coronavirus. The Bishop will review daily the situation and will alert us immediately as to when Masses and other public worship can be resumed.

At the direction of the Bishop, fr. Anthony Francis will continue to offer daily Mass for your behalf as well as for the intentions that have been scheduled each day. These Masses will be said privately. He will say only one Mass for Sunday but for all the intentions scheduled for the weekend Liturgies. Bishop Mark will preside at a Mass on Sundays at 11:00AM that will be available on the Diocesan website and social media.

Because it seems unlikely that public Masses will be permitted until AFTER Easter, the Liturgies of Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum will also be celebrated privately by fr. Anthony Francis. The new Easter Candle as well as the new Holy Oils will be blessed and distributed once the restrictions have been lifted.

While there are no Baptisms or weddings currently scheduled during this crisis, direction has been given that both would take place privately and limited to immediate family.

All currently scheduled Confirmations have been postponed. The Bishop plans to reschedule Confirmations after the crisis has passed. Future dates, times and locations will be determined at the time.

All First Communions are postponed, as well, and will be rescheduled.

The Bishop has required that all Penance services be cancelled until the current restrictions on crowd size have been lifted. BUT, individual Confessions are permitted. fr. Anthony Francis will continue to hear individual Confessions at the time of Saturdays, 3:15PM – 4:00PM and Tuesday evenings from 5:45PM – 6:15PM. Disinfecting wipes will be available in the Reconciliation Room for penitents to wipe the wooden ledge, etc., before and after their Confession. Please dispose of them in wastepaper basket outside the reconciliation room.

Funerals may continue to be celebrated but only for immediate family members to attend. The time of the Funeral Mass will not be published either by the Parish nor by way of obituary. It is acceptable for families to request a Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass to be held at the funeral home. Vigils will be conducted at the discretion of the families and funeral directors in keeping with the requirements of public safety.

The Bishop directs the following for the pastoral care of the sick. Visiting the sick in hospitals/rehabs will be done by the approved hospital chaplains keeping with the stipulations of the health care facilities. fr. Anthony Francis will only be able to visit nursing homes and other facilities IN DANGER OF DEATH and with the approval of the local facilities. Home visits will also only be made IN DANGER OF DEATH.

Individual appointments (one-on-one) may continue.

By direct order of the Bishop, all social gatherings are prohibited until further notice. This includes parish gatherings, meeting of parish groups, fish fries and other fundraisers. These measures are required in order to avoid person-to-person contact and spread of the COVID-19. Furthermore, because it is impossible to observe the necessary sterile procedures and because of the possibility of gatherings of people in excess of what is required for public safety, all takeout meals for fundraising must be suspended immediately.

Finally, questions about finances. These sacrifices are difficult for your parish. The suspension of our fundraising will hurt. The offering is very important to the parish and now, even that has ceased without public worship. The good news is, there is a way to give online to St. Francis of Assisi. First, go to the parish website: www.stfrancisofassisijohnstown.com and click on the online giving tab or visit www.dioceseaj.org/giving and click the donate now button. There you will see another button to donate to your parish. This will assist us in being able to continue paying our bills! You certainly may mail your donations to the respective parish offices. You may also drop off your envelope at St. Francis of Assisi Parish office.

Please visit the parish website for a link to view Daily Mass.

Who would have thought that this is the fasting we are being asked to do this Lent of 2020?

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER DURING CORONAVIRUS

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain with steadfast Faith.

You, salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee,

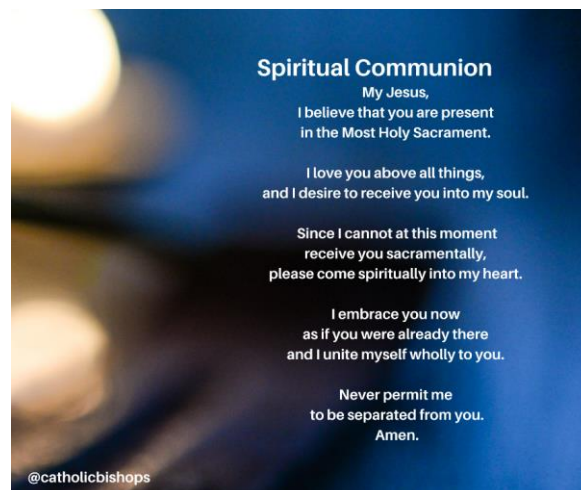
Joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

He Who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

This is a simple and loving act of Spiritual Communion we are called to make in these times, while we are unable to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist:



PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams; Rose Blaschak, Odessa Bobak, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czyrnik, Verne Esposito, LeAnn Golby, Caleb Herdman, Alicia Junghans, John Kasper, Kathryn Legat, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Margaret Murray, Carl Pavlosky, Rowen Ream, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, James Schuster, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobecky, Leona Sutt, Agnes Swarney, Jeanne Toth, Sheila Weppner, Dorothy Youchak.

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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 Guarno, USCG; Master at Arms 2nd Class Izeke W. Pinkas, Fallon, NV; Lt. Col. Joshua P. Higgins, US Army; Petty Officer 1st Class Paul Rambish, US Navy, Coronado Naval Base, San Diego; Major Melinda Rován Corallo, Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, NV; HMC David Bakos, US Navy; PFC; Lance Corporal Jacob Taylor, USMC; Private 1st Class Zack Taylor, US Army; 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, Captain Aaron Donahey, US Army, Fort Stewart, GA; Petty Officer 1st Class Heather L. Dovala, Great Lakes, IL.; Sgt. Jarod Pisarchik, Army National Guard; Ens. Kara Yingling, Pentagon; Lt. JG Shannon Yingling; S/SSgt 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; Senior Airman Anthony Rosage, USAF; Fort Gordon, GA; Tech Sgt. Daniel Bracken, USAF, deployed to Kobal Afghanistan; Spc. Adken Torchia, US Army, Fort Drum, NY; Sgt. Lucas Tomak, US Army, Fort Hood, TX; Lt. Kenneth Yacynych, US Army, Fort Lewis, WA; Cpl Elliott Mulvehill, USMC, New River, NC.; Senior Airman Jeremy Williams, Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan; Kasey Meredith, O.C.S., USMC, Quantico, VA.; Pvt. Harrison Barham, US Army, Fort Leonard Wood, MO.; Cpl. Aunna Yingling, US Army, Afghanistan; Petty Officer 2nd Class, Gage Pollino, US Navy.

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.

A PRAYER FOR OUR DEPLOYED MILITARY: Heavenly Father, inspire those who are overseas for the cause of peace. Send Your Son, Jesus Christ, as the Prince of Peace. Bless the men and women of our military who respond to the needs of peacekeeping. Keep them safe from harm. Let them be models of discipline and courage and bring them home safely to their loved ones. We ask this in Your Name. Amen.

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CEMETERY CLEAN UP – Monday, March 23 through Tuesday, March 31. All items must be removed from St. Francis Cemetery by March 31. Thank you for your cooperation.