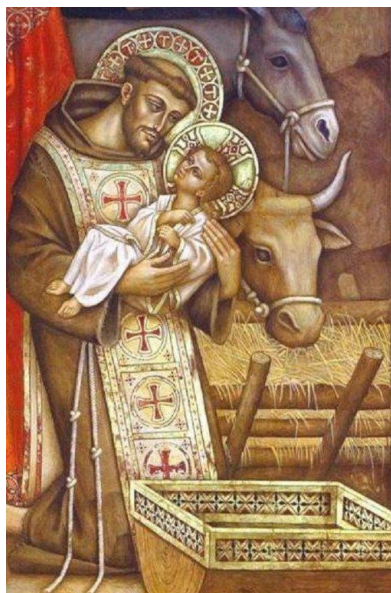


December 20, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent
THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

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.;
Permanent Deacon Bruce Becker
St. Francis of Assisi, 120 Barron Avenue
Johnstown, 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>

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

Men's Club – Gregory Solomon

Rosary Society – Cecilia Neiderer

ALL ARE REMINDED TO DRESS WITH REVERENCE AND RESPECT AS THEY COME TO LITURGY ALL YEAR LONG

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 5:45 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.

First Friday – Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 9:30AM – 5:30PM.

Rosary Society – First Monday of the Month – 6:00PM in the Church

Men's Club – First Thursday of the Month – 7:00PM in the Activity Center

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS the family and friends of +Karen Sakmar who was laid to rest last week. Welcoming God, receive from our hands the loved ones we return to you.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR MASS SCHEDULE:

Thursday, December 24 – 4:00PM
Friday, December 25 – 12Midnight, 9:30AM
Thursday, December 31 – 4:00PM
Friday, January 1 – 9:30AM

FOR UNTO US
A CHILD IS BORN



DECORATING OF THE CHURCH for the Christmas Season will take place on Wednesday, December 23 beginning at 10:00AM. All help is greatly appreciated.

PARISH OFFICE will be CLOSED Thursday, December 24 through Monday, December 28. Office will also be closed on Thursday, December 31 and Friday, January 1.

ROSARY SOCIETY will meet on Monday, January 4 at 6:00PM. Please consider joining us for Rosary, Reflection and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

FISH FRY has been tentatively scheduled for **Friday, January 8, 2021** for **TAKE OUT ONLY**. Thanks again to all who volunteered for the last Fish Fry. If you are willing to share some of your time, please contact the Parish Office. The wearing of masks and social distancing protocols will be in place. *Orders will be taken by calling the Activity Center at 539-3518 on Thursday, January 7 from 8:00AM until 11:00AM and on Friday, January 8 from 8:00AM until ?*

SANCTUARY CANDLE will burn this week for +Ethel Petak by Daughter Michele.

MISSALETTES 2020-2021 – 1st Sunday of Advent (Nov. 29, 2020) – The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has truly upset the apple cart in so many ways! Since at the present time we are not allowed to put Missalettes or hymnals in the Church, the Parish Council suggested that the new Missalettes be made available to parishioners for a donation of \$5.00 and the green covers for \$1.00. If you are interested in obtaining 1 or several (1 per member of a family or household) Missalettes, **please contact the Parish Office (M-Thurs 9AM-3PM) to place your request.**

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2021 are for pick up at the Parish Office Monday through Thursday from 9:00AM until 3:00PM. Please – if you know of someone who is unable to pick up their envelopes and you can do so for them – do not hesitate to help by delivering the envelopes to them. Thank you!

OPLATEK is now available at the rear of the Church. Please use the envelopes provided for your donation and place in the candle money box.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR PARISH LAST WEEK: Adults 2,835.91; Loose - \$111.00; Children - \$8.00; Monthly - \$465.00; Christmas - \$785.00; Flowers - \$71.02; Candles - \$145.00; St. Vincent de Paul - \$5.00; Thanksgiving - \$5.00; Religious Retirement - \$85.80; Holy Day - \$174.50; Misc. - \$150.00. Total Collection- \$4,841.23.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION DURING ADVENT:

Monday, December 20 – 5:00PM – St. Benedict
Monday, December 21 – 6:00PM – 7:00PM – St. Francis of Assisi
Wednesday, December 23 – 6:00PM – 7:00PM – St. Francis of Assisi

Background on the Gospel Reading

This Sunday we read the story of the Angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary about the birth of Jesus. This story is found only in Luke's Gospel. On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, the liturgy shifts our attention from John the Baptist to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both John and Mary serve as important figures for our reflection during the Season of Advent; they both played instrumental roles in preparing the way for Jesus. Last week we reflected on John the Baptist's announcement that the Savior was among us, although not yet recognized. This week we reflect upon Mary's

example of Faith and obedience to God, traits which permitted her to receive the Angel's message that God's Son would be born as a human person, as one of us.

We are familiar with the story of the Annunciation, and it is fitting that we recall how God announced the birth of Jesus as we make our final preparations for our celebration of the Incarnation. The Angel Gabriel visited Mary, a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph. Mary greeted the Angel's news with awe and wonder and asked how it could be possible that she could give birth to a child. In his reply, the Angel Gabriel announced the seemingly impossible reality: the Child to be born would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and would be God's own Son. The Angel reported to Mary another miracle: her relative Elizabeth was also pregnant despite having been thought to be unable to have a child. Mary's response to the Angel, which is called her *fiat*, is an example of complete Faith and obedience to God. The story of the Annunciation calls to our attention God's wondrous action in human history. God chose a human person to give birth to His Son so that all humanity would know God's salvation. Mary, already full of God's Grace, was able to cooperate in this great plan for our salvation. Thus Jesus was born as one of us, fully human and also fully Divine. This is the mystery we prepare to celebrate at Christmas, the mystery of the Incarnation. In the model of Mary, we pray that we will be people of Faith who recognize God's saving plan for us and are able to respond with obedience.

DIOCESE TO AIR CHRISTMAS MASSES- As part of its continuing effort to keep local Catholics connected during the coronavirus epidemic, the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown is pleased to offer expanded television opportunities through its *Proclaim!* TV Ministry this Christmas. Bishop Mark Bartchak will celebrate Mass on Christmas Eve at St. John Gualbert Cathedral in Johnstown, which will air live at 7:00PM on WWCP FOX 8. The Christmas Day Mass at St. John Gualbert will air at Noon on WATM ABC 23 with the Very Reverend James Crookston, Rector, as celebrant. This year, the Diocese is also presenting a television special **“Joy to the World: Christmas in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.”** The show will highlight beloved Christmas traditions, the overwhelming spirit of giving, and beautiful music from parish and school musicians. It will air on December 20 at 1:00PM on WATM ABC 23 and on Christmas morning at 7:00AM on WWCP Fox 8.

Daily Prayer to be Said During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Loving God, Your Son, Jesus Christ traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At His command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, God of all life, and in the midst of the global spread of coronavirus, may we experience Your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health. Gentle God, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with You in Your Eternal Peace. Be with the families of those who are sick or have died.

As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know Your peace.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers, first responders, essential workers and all who seek to heal, serve and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know Your protection and peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve.

Whether home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare.

In place of our anxiety, give us Your peace, comfort and love. Gentle and loving God, heal us and come to our aid. Amen.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams; Rose Blaschak, Odessa Bobak, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czynnik, Jean Drop, Verne Esposito, LeAnn Golby, Caleb Herdman, Alicia Junghans, Kathryn Legat, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Margaret Murray, Carl Pavlosky, Cecilia Pribish, Rowen Ream, Kathy Reddy, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, James Schuster, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobbecky, Leona Sutt, Agnes Swarney, Jeanne Toth, Sheila Weppner, Rebecca Woodruff.

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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 Guarino, 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, **Sgt. Bryan Maxwell Porath**, **Captain Aaron Donahey**, **US Army**, South Korea; **Petty Officer 1st Class Heather L. Dovala**, Great Lakes, IL.; **Sgt. Jarod Pisarchik**, Army National Guard; **LCDR Kara Yingling**, San Diego; **LCDR Shannon Yingling**; **S/SSgt Devon Gilbert**, Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa; **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; **Sgt. Adken Torchia**, US Army, Fort Drum, NY; **Sgt. Lucas Tomak**, US Army, Fort Hood, TX; **Lt. Kenneth Yacynych**, US Army, Fort Lewis, WA; **Sgt. Elliott Mulvehill**, **USMC**, Ginowan, Japan.; **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**; **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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COMMUNITY NEWS

PRO LIFE VIGIL Every Thursday from 3:00PM - 4:00PM. We hold a prayer vigil across from the Franklin Street Planned Parenthood facility here in Johnstown. For more information, call Gale at 539-0155.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI: Connect with your Creator, Redeemer, and Spiritual Guide in a stress-free environment at the Eucharistic Adoration every First Friday of the month from 9:30AM until 5:30PM at St. Francis of Assisi Church. It is important that each ½ hour or hour have two adorers to adore and protect the Blessed Sacrament. PLEASE SIGN UP on the schedule of times provided in the Main Vestibule.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS: Lord Jesus Christ, Shepherd of souls, Who called the Apostles to be fishers of men, raise up new apostles in Your Holy Church. Teach them that to serve You is to reign: to possess You is to possess all things. Kindle in the hearts of our young people the fire of zeal for souls. Make them eager to spread Your Kingdom on earth. Grant them courage to follow You, Who are the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.