

December 12, 2021
3rd Sunday of Advent
THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Mission Statement: St. Francis of Assisi is a Roman Catholic worshipping Community of Faith, dedicated to the concept of putting "Christ first" in our hearts, lives, family and community, with the hope that our world can become a better place and that we can all be made worthy to enter into the Kingdom of God. Our 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 – Megan Billow-Berchick
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 – Deacon Bruce Becker
Men’s Club – Acting President, David King
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

CONGRATULATIONS – Congratulations on the Baptism of Emery Jean Stibich and her parents, Brian and Katherine Stibich and Godparents, Ross and Jordan Dalti.

2022 OFFERTORY ENVELOPES - Are in the back of the Church!

2022 CHURCH CALENDARS – Are Blessed and in the back of the Church!

*****PARISH OFFICE – Will be CLOSED Wednesday December 23 for CHRISTMAS. We will reopen on Monday December 27th. *****

THE CHILDREN OF THE PARISH enrolled in our Religious Education Program are encouraged to participate in the 4:00PM Mass on Christmas Eve. We will be singing a few Christmas Carols during Mass and present a tableau of the Nativity. The children should dress in their “Sunday best” and be in the vestibule of the Church by 3:30PM so we can organize and begin Mass promptly at 4:00PM. Thank you for your cooperation.

CHRISTMAS CHURCH DECORATING - Will be on December 23rd, any and all help is greatly appreciated.

TABLES FOR SALE – Tables from the Hall are being sold for \$5 each. They are a sturdy 8 foot long wooden table with folding legs and wooden top.

OPLATEK – Is now available at the rear of the Church. Please use the envelope provided for your donation and place in the Candle Money Box or in the Collection Basket.

OREMUS MINISTRY (PRAYER CHAIN) – We are seeking new members for the Oremus Ministry. If you would be willing to help people in need through prayer, Please contact the Parish Office at (814)539-1632.

PARISH DIRECTORY PHOTOS– There is no cost to be photographed for the St. Francis Picture Directory. If we have 75 households participate, each family photographed receives a complimentary directory and a free 8 X 10 photo. Additional photos will be available for purchase at a reasonable cost but there will be no high pressure sales pushed. All sales are optional. Please sign the list in the vestibule ASAP. Thanks!!

LOOKING AHEAD - St. Francis of Assisi Parish was established in 1922 as a Slovak ethnic Parish in the West End of Johnstown, PA. The 1st Mass of the Parish was celebrated December 24, 1922. The present Parish Council is in the process of planning a 100th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, October 16, 2022 at 12Noon with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark followed by an anniversary dinner. More info coming soon.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE FROM THE PASTOR: I am so overwhelmed at the generosity of the Parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi for the “Joe Bartko” bags of groceries for the St. Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen (which netted 437 lbs) WOW!! I continue to be overwhelmed at your generosity for the gifts for the Cambria City Mission, the Gabriel Project, and the gift cards to Giant Eagle. DOUBLE WOW! I am most appreciative to Heather Kmetz and her crew for the delightful Christmas party for our youngsters and for the special appearance of “St. Nicholas” Thank You! I am amazed at the dedication of our parishioners who give of themselves as Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Altar Servers, Parish Council members, Finance Council members, Prayer-chain members, Cemetery Committee, Parish Office Staff, Maintenance Staff, the Men’s Club, the Rosary Society, Music Ministry, Fish Fry workers, Gob makers, and our Catechists. Agimus tibi – we give thanks to you!
May the Lord Bless You and Keep You Always, Fr. A.F

Background on the Gospel Reading

This Sunday's Gospel continues last week's focus on John the Baptist and his role in preparing the way for Christ. Recall that last week's reading described John's appearance in the desert and established his connection with the prophetic tradition of Israel. If we were to read Luke's Gospel continuously, we would learn about John the Baptist challenging the crowds who came to him and calling upon them to show evidence of their repentance. John tells his listeners that they cannot rely on their lineage as Israelites because children of Abraham can be raised up from stones. Repentance, rather, must be observable in one's actions. Here, Luke is continuing to set up two important themes of his Gospel message: the Christian faith is expressed in one's actions, and the call to salvation is extended to everyone, Jews and Gentiles.

In today's Gospel reading, the crowds ask John the Baptist for specifics. What evidence of repentance is required? John replies by naming concrete actions: crowds should share their food and cloaks; tax collectors should be just; soldiers should act fairly. The concern for justice is a hallmark of Luke's Gospel.

When the crowd begins to wonder if John the Baptist might be the Messiah, John interprets his baptism and makes it clear that his ministry is in preparation for the Messiah. John the Baptist knows his place and role in God's Plan of Salvation. By encouraging the crowd to act similarly in accordance with their stations in life, John's teaching suggests that each person has a role to play in God's Salvation. It is the great mystery of our salvation that God permits and even asks for human cooperation in His Divine plans.

The third Sunday of Advent is also called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is a Latin word that means "rejoice." This name is taken from the entrance antiphon for Sunday's Mass, which is also echoed in today's second reading from the Paul's letter to the Philippians. Some people mark this Sunday by lighting a pink candle instead of a purple one on their Advent wreath. It is a reminder that the Advent season is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.

December 12, 2021 Third Sunday of Advent

We are to be filled with joy on this Gaudette Sunday as we continue our preparations for the feast of our Savior's birth and ultimately for His Second Coming.

Paul's instructions for obtaining peace remind us that we can go to God with all our needs and present them to Him along with our thanks. This is a vital aspect of a stewardship way of life: gratitude to God in response to His great love and countless gifts given to us.

We are reminded in the Gospel of Luke how to live out this sense of thankfulness, and make our lives a "Christmas gift" to Christ. John the Baptist tells the people in the crowds, the tax collectors and the soldiers that no matter what their position in life is, they should be good and generous stewards of all God's gifts. When we get this gift right, all the other presents and to-dos on our lists will fall into their proper place.

(Stewardship Reflection, Catholic Stewardship Consultants, Inc. 11/16/2021)

CONTRIBUTIONS WEEK LAST WEEK: Loose - \$132.00; Adults - \$2026.27; Children - \$6.00; Monthly - \$655.02; Candles - \$193.00; Christmas - \$100.00; Christmas Flowers - \$268.00; All Souls - \$5.00; Immaculate Conception - \$76.00 – Catholic Charities - \$22.00; Thanksgiving - \$30.00; Donation - \$295.00; Retired Religious - \$15.00; Feast Day - \$10.00; - Total Collection - \$3833.29.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czyrnik, Verne Esposito, Alicia Junghans, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Paulette Mirilovich, Rowen Ream, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, James Schuster, Betty Scott, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobacky, Leona Sutt, Agnes Swarney, Paulette Torchia, Joe Torchia, David Watson, Sheila Weppner.

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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; **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, Ft. Steward, GA; **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;; **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; **Pvt. 1st Class Daylee Ragno**, US Army, E-3 Paratrooper, Fort Bragg, NC..

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.

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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 uplift in prayer our Confirmation Candidates (Alana Murphy, Connor and Christian Haberkorn, and Brandon Wincer) who officially were enrolled in the Confirmation Program. They are scheduled to be confirmed on Thursday, May 5, 2022.