

March 27, 2022
4th Sunday in Lent
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
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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

MASS SCHEDULE – Monday – 9:00AM, Tuesday – 6:15PM, Wednesday – Saturday – 9:00AM
Saturday – 4:00PM, Sunday – 7:30AM & 9:30AM

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 – 6:30PM in the Activity Center

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS – The Family and Friends of +**Rose Zvonik**, who was laid to rest last week. Welcoming God receive from our hands the Loved Ones we return to You.

SPECIAL THANKS – To all the volunteers who made the special Easter bread.

ATTENTION ALTAR SERVERS – Please reserve Saturday, April 2nd at 10:00AM, to review Altar Serving at the Church. Lunch will be served after practice.

SEDER MEAL – Sign-up sheet for the Seder Meal is in the Main Vestibule. It will be held on April 14th at 5:00PM at the Activity Building. We ask that you bring a covered dish. The Church will cover the meat.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK & EASTER – If you are able and willing to assist at the Liturgies for Holy Week (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil & Easter Sunday) please use the sign-up sheets that are located in the Main Vestibule.

CHILDREN’S EASTER PARTY – Sign-up Sheet is in the main Vestibule. The Party is scheduled on April 10th from 1:00 – 3:00PM. Last day for sign-up is April 3rd.

GOB ICING - will be made on Tuesday, March 29th from 7:00AM-11AM. Gobs will be filled on Wednesday, March 30th from 8:00AM until 10:00AM and from 6:00PM until 8:00PM. All help is welcome and appreciated.

SYNOD SURVEY – Please turn in the Synod Survey that was in the Bulletin a few weeks ago, you can put your completed survey in the collection basket. If you need a new survey please contact the Parish Office. All surveys are due by April 1st.

SAVE THE DATE: Please mark your calendars! The photo sessions for the new St. Francis Picture Directory will be on **Friday & Saturday, April 1 & 2 and Tuesday & Wednesday, April 5 & 6**. Please go to the website to sign-up at www.ucdir.com and click on Photography Appt Scheduling Log. The Church code is “pa932” and Parishioner’s password is “photos”. **The Site is down from Friday at midnight till Sunday night at midnight, it ONLY works Monday –Friday!** If you don’t have a computer you can sign-up in at back of the Church. 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.

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, with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark at 12 Noon, followed by an anniversary dinner. More info coming soon.

CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK: Loose - \$178.00; Adults - \$2786.28; Monthly - \$215.00; Candles - \$164.50; Black & Indian Mission - \$25.00; Mandeville - \$35.00; Catholic Relief - \$15.00; Easter Flowers - \$337.03; St. Vincent DePaul - \$20.00; Solemnity of Mary - \$10.00; First Offering - \$10.00; Donation - \$185.00 - Total Collection - \$3980.81. — **UKRAINE COLLECTION** - \$225.00

COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE WITH BISHOP MARK - There will be 3 Diocesan Lenten Communal Penance Services this year–Tues, April 5th at 7PM at Church of the Good Shepherd in State College; Wed, April 6th at 6PM at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona; and Thursday April 7th at St John Gualbert Cathedral in Johnstown.

SANCTUARY CANDLE – Will burn for the month of March for Alice Havers.

Background on the Gospel Reading

The Parable Jesus tells in today's Gospel is unique to the Gospel of Luke. Jesus has been teaching the crowds as He Journeys to Jerusalem. As He teaches, the Pharisees and Scribes complain and challenge Jesus because He is welcoming sinners at His table. Today we hear the third of three parables that Jesus tells in response to His critics. These three familiar parables—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and today's parable of the prodigal son—invite us to consider the depth of God's mercy and love.

The Pharisees taught a scrupulous observance of Jewish Law. In their interpretation and practice, observant Jews who shared table fellowship with sinners would be made unclean. Like Jesus, the Pharisees hoped to lead sinners back to God. The Pharisees, however, required that sinners first become ritually clean—observant of the Pharisees' interpretation of Jewish Law—before sharing table fellowship. This appears to be one of the major differences between the Pharisees and Jesus. Jesus reaches out to sinners while they are still sinners, inviting them to conversion through fellowship with Him. Jesus is God acting among us; by befriending us, He is inviting us to return to friendship with God. Through friendship with Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we, in turn, bear fruit for God. Recall last Sunday's Gospel and the barren fig tree.

Our familiarity with today's parable risks dulling us to its tremendously powerful message. We call this the parable of the lost son or the prodigal son. Any focus on the younger son, however, must also be balanced by an examination of the unusual behavior of the father.

First we must imagine our first response to the audacity of a son who asks for his inheritance before his father has died. Indignation would certainly be a justifiable response to such a request. Yet the father in this parable agrees to honor the son's request and divides his property among his two sons. How might we describe such a father? Foolish comes to mind, but so does trusting. Without property of his own, the father must rely upon his sons to provide for his well-being.

The younger son takes his inheritance and leaves home. The older son remains, continuing to provide for the father and the household. Having been disgraced by the younger son, the father spends some time watching the road for the return of the lost son. When he eventually sees his wayward son returning, the father not only welcomes him but also runs out to greet him and then honors him with a party. We say that this father is loving and forgiving. Yet these adjectives only begin to describe the depth of love and mercy that characterize the father.

We find no surprise in the anger of the older son. Yet the father appears sad and even confused by the older son's indignation. He says in reply that they should celebrate because the lost son had returned. The father is filled with gratitude and love for the older son's faithfulness. This love is in no way diminished by the father's rejoicing at the return of the younger son. Yet the older son's jealousy reveals his limited understanding of the depth of his father's love.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is traditionally called Laetare Sunday. Laetare is a Latin word that means “rejoice.” Today's Gospel describes the reason for our joy: God's great love for us has been revealed in Jesus. Through his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, Christ has reconciled us with God and one another.

4th Sunday of Lent (March 27)

Today we are reminded of the Lenten themes of awakening and life-changing love that the Father has for each of us. We are all familiar with the Gospel story; the bratty younger “prodigal” son who has the audacity to ask his dad for his inheritance early, only to squander it sinfully away, is forgiven and welcomed home with open arms, and then also is given a party! There are decisions we have made selfishly and turned away from God in our own lives too. We often squander away the inheritance of grace He has given us. The prodigal's father is our Father too. We should be giving God the party! If we can't give Him that grand feast in the Gospel we can start by giving Him one little thing during Lent. Take even a small faltering step closer to Him; go to confession, join in the Stations of the Cross, call a family member or friend you are at odds with and try to reconcile. With just the tiniest bit of spiritual “spring cleaning” we can be sure we will be swept up in our Father's loving embrace and become that “new creation” St. Paul talked about in the Second Reading. (*Stewardship Reflections*, Catholic Stewardship Consultants, Inc. 2019/3/21)

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Kathy Barczak, 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 Sobecky, Leona Sutt, 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 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; Lt. Col. Melinda Rovon Corallo, Travis Air Force Base, California; 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;; Capt. 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; SPC Morgan Rullo, ARNG Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

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.

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 1/2 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 Branden Wincer) who officially were enrolled in the Confirmation Program. They are scheduled to be confirmed on Thursday, May 5, 2022.