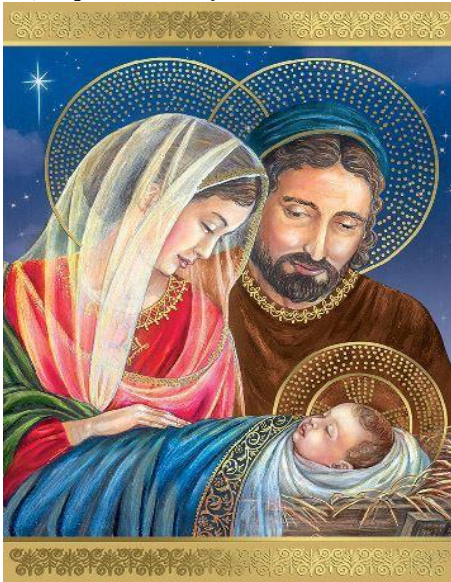


December 25, 2022

The Nativity of the Lord

100th Anniversary THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF 1922 - 2022
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 – stfrancis@atanticbbn.net

Facebook – St. Francis of Assisi

Oremus Ministry (Prayer Chain) – 814-539-1632

Web Site: <http://www.stfrancisofassisijohnstown.com>

Parish Secretary – Megan Bellow-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 +**Raymond Toth**, who was laid to rest last week. Welcoming God receive from our hands the Loved Ones we return to You.

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED – On Monday, December 26th in Observance of Christmas.

OFFERTORY ENVELOPES – Are now available in the Parish Rectory.

SPECIAL THANK YOU – to Joe and Dolores Fatula for the beautiful St. Michael Statue in the back of the Church!

THANK YOU – To the Men’s Club for the generous donation.

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

CCD CLASSES – ALL CCD CLASSES are to report to St. Francis Convent across the street from the Church on Sunday, January 8th for class. If you have any questions please contact Deacon Bruce Becker.

CASH BASH – Save the Date for FEBRUARY 11th at St. Francis Activity Center! Tickets are being sold before and after each Mass, or call Fran at (814)536-3667. Tickets are \$25 and includes food and non-alcoholic beverages. \$200 given away every half hour, \$500 at 7:30 and 9:00. We will also have qualifiers, 50/50, baskets, door prizes and much more! Donations of whiskey and vodka needed. Baskets valued at \$25 needed also. Please call Alice at (814)536-0948 or Georgetta at (814)535-4252. Let’s all join in and make the cash Bash a SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER!

ECHOES OF A POLISH CHRISTMAS – All Saints Parish in Boswell will host their annual singing of Polish Christmas Carols (known as Kolędy) on Sunday January 8nd at 2:00 PM at their church in Boswell (325 Quemahoning Street). Following the singing of hymns by the parish’s Polish choir, there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament as well as refreshments. Kolędy help to capture some of the finest sentiments, values, and emotions of the Polish religious, national, and artistic heritage. Polish Christmas customs are very rich; whether you are Polish or not, please come and experience these time honored hymns celebrating the birth of Christ.

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord – Christmas, December 25

The opening words of the Gospel of John are why we celebrate Christmas, “The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through Him.” The angel Gabriel greeted our Blessed Mother Mary with the Greek word *Kaire!* That means “Be joyful.” At Christmas Eve Mass we hear, “I proclaim to you Good News of great joy; today a Savior is Born for us, Christ the Lord.”

Pope Francis opened his sermon on Christmas day last year by saying this: “Christmas is joy, religious joy, an inner joy of light and peace.” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI shares this: “Joy is the true gift of Christmas. We can communicate this joy simply: with a smile, a kind gesture, a little help, forgiveness. And the joy we give will certainly come back to us... Let us pray that this presence of the liberating joy of God shines forth in our lives.” Let us take that joy and change our lives and the lives of others. When we say “Merry Christmas” let us mean it with every fabric of our being. (*Stewardship Reflection*, Catholic Stewardship Consultants, Inc. 2022/11/22)

Background on the Gospel Reading

There are four Masses that are celebrated for the Feast of Christmas and each is given its own set of readings to help us contemplate Christ's Birth. The Gospel for the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve is taken from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The Mass at Midnight proclaims the Birth of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. The Mass at Dawn on Christmas morning continues the story of the Birth of Jesus as found in Luke's Gospel, ending with the shepherds' visit to the Infant Jesus. In each of these Gospel readings, we hear portions of the Infancy narratives with which we are familiar.

The Gospel for the Christmas Mass During the Day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this part of John's Gospel is not an Infancy narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, John's Gospel starts at the very beginning and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words echo the first verse in the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' Birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' Birth was the result of God's initiative. John's Gospel, however, emphasizes that Jesus' Birth was the divine intention from the moment of Creation.

As we observe in today's reading, the Gospel of John includes highly philosophical and theological language. One example that particularly stands out in this Gospel is John's repeated references to "the Word" in the opening verse. This expression ("logos" in the Greek) borrows from a concept found in both Jewish and Greek thought. Jews used this phrase to describe God's action in the Creation story, for example, and in the Wisdom literature. In Greek thought, the "logos" was understood as an intermediary between God and humanity. John and others in the early Church adopted this language to describe God's Incarnation in Jesus. As the term was used to express the Trinitarian faith of Christians, the Word came to be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity.

In this prologue to the Gospel of John, we also hear the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel. These are often presented as dualities: light and dark, truth and falsehood, life and death, and belief and unbelief. We also hear in this prologue a unique aspect of John's Gospel, the theme of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to Jesus, the Light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witness to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words will testify to Jesus' Identity as God's Incarnate Word.

Thinking about Jesus' Birth in these theological and cosmological terms is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us His children.

CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK: Loose - \$138.00; Adults - \$2,974.25; Monthly - \$235.00; Candles - \$92.00; Christmas Flowers - \$25.00; Christmas - \$305.00; St. Vincent DePaul - \$120.00; Immaculate Conception - \$65.00; Priest Retirement - \$10.00; Donation - \$180.00; Donation Christmas Party - \$50.00; Online Giving - \$286.00 - Total Collection - \$4,480.25.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Kathy Barczak, James Bauer, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czynnik, Verne Esposito, Alicia Junghans, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Rowen Ream, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, James Schuster, Betty Scott, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobecky, Leona Sutt, Joe Torchia, David Watson, Sheila Weppner, Mark Wojno.

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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; **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**, Fort Leavenworth, KS.; **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; **Captain 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 Hood; **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; **Fr. William Appel**, Navy Chaplain, U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

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.

Did you know that it is a custom in Johnstown to wear something RED on Fridays to honor our military?

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COMMUNITY NEWS

PRO LIFE VIGIL – is held weekly on various days and various times across from the Planned Parenthood on Franklin Street in Johnstown. Please call Gale Bala for information (814)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. Access to the Church is by ringing the doorbell at the Barron Avenue door for admittance – a matter of safety for the Blessed

Sacrament and adorers.