

August 20, 2023
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time
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
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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 –
Cemetery Council President - William Heim – 254- 2942
Director of Religious Education – Deacon Bruce Becker
Men’s Club President – Philip Scott
Rosary Society – Cecilia Neiderer

MASS SCHEDULE – Monday – 9:00AM, Tuesday – 6:15PM, Wednesday – Saturday – 9:00AM
Saturday Vigil– 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

Heartfelt thanks for the prayers, wishes, offers of lodging, and gifts in the wake of my devastating house fire. My house will be repaired but it will take 8 months. Currently I reside at the Hampton Inn with my two surviving pets. In the near future I imagine I will move to a furnished house or apartment. I appreciate continued prayers. I am grateful to God that responders are safe and did such a good job so that my house was not completely destroyed. – Gale Bala

2023 WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION – Bishop Mark Bartchak and the Family Life Office cordially invite all couples celebrating **1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60+ Years of marriage in 2023** (and their families) to attend the **Annual Wedding Anniversary Liturgy**. Couples may attend Sunday, **September 10** in **ALTOONA** at Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament or Sunday, **September 17** in **JOHNSTOWN** at St. John Gualbert Cathedral. Both locations begin at **2:00 PM** Most Rev. Bishop Mark will be the celebrant and homilist at each celebration. Refreshments/snacks will be available after the Mass for Anniversary Couples and their Families. **Reservations must be made through your Parish for either celebration by Tuesday, August 29.**

"If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion." -- St. Maximilian Kolbe

"How many of you say: I should like to see His face, His garments, His shoes. You do see Him, you eat Him. He gives Himself to you, not only that you may see Him, but also to be your food and nourishment." -- St. John Chrysostom
Because of the pew research showing such a low percentage of Catholics believing in the true presence, I have purchased some books titled "The Eucharist is really Jesus". It pains me every time I see parishioners leave the church. How can they walk away from the Eucharist?

Blessed Carlo Acutis after receiving his First Holy Communion went to Mass every day of his life afterward to receive Communion. He called it his Highway to Heaven until his untimely death at age 15. **If you have doubts, please take a book, read it and then share it with other family members or friends who may be doubting also. The books are located in the Main Vestibule of the Church. – Paulette Torchia**

SWISS STEAK DINNER – Come to the Church of the Transfiguration on Sunday, August 27th and enjoy an easy and delicious Sunday dinner. We open our doors at the Parish Hall at 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM. Come into our parking lot at 219 Third Street, Conemaugh. It is \$13.00 a meal that includes hot Swiss Steak, in its own gravy, green beans, bun, salad, and desert. Eat in or Take-Out. You will enjoy your dinner and relax and have fun. You may consider buying some take outs to take home for a quick and easy dinner later this week. They freeze up nice. Enjoy and thank you for your support!

ALL MARIANNA PIZZA & SUB ORDERS MUST BE TURNED IN THE COLLECTION BASKET THIS WEEKEND! NO LATE ORDERS – ALL ORDERS MUST BE TURNED IN BY AUGUST 20th –ORDERS WILL BE PICKED UP ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2nd between 9:00 AM – 12 Noon. GOBS WILL ALSO BE SOLD FOR \$2.00 each.

CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK: Loose – \$395.00; Adults – \$2,031.25; Monthly – \$428.00; Candles – \$81.00; Donation – \$65.00; Assumption – \$72.00; Online Giving – \$191.00 – Total Collection – \$3,263.25. **Franciscan Mission Appeal – \$744.00**

Background on the Gospel Reading

Today we move ahead in our reading of Matthew's Gospel. Last week we read about Jesus walking on the water and the Disciples' confession of faith that Jesus is the Son of God. If we were reading Matthew's entire Gospel, we would have read about Jesus' debate with the Pharisees about Jewish purity laws. Jesus argues that it is not what goes into us that makes us unclean; He is referring to the strict Jewish dietary rules. Instead our words and our actions—what comes out of us—make us unclean because they emerge from a heart that is unclean.

Knowing about Jesus' debate with the Pharisees helps us to understand today's Gospel. In fact the story heightens the surprise and shock we feel as we hear Jesus' exchange with the Canaanite woman. The woman, who is not Jewish, approaches Jesus, requesting that He heal her demon-possessed daughter. At first Jesus ignores her; He says nothing. The Disciples ask Jesus to send her away, and Jesus agrees, remarking that He was sent to Minister to the Jews alone.

The woman persists, paying homage to Jesus, and yet Jesus denies her request again. He even insults her, using a Jewish word of derision for Gentiles, "dog." But the woman cleverly turns Jesus' insult into an affirmation of faith. Only then does Jesus grant her request and heal her daughter.

Jesus' unresponsiveness to this woman may strike us as uncharacteristic or shocking. Yet in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' Ministry is directed primarily to the people of Israel. At only a very few points, such as the one found in today's Gospel, do we find Jesus anticipating the later Christian Ministry to the rest of the world.

Behind Matthew's text we can hear this early Christian community's struggle to understand how God's selection of Israel is consistent with two events: Israel's rejection of Jesus and the Gentiles' acceptance of Jesus. Just as Jesus was surprised by the faith expressed by the Canaanite woman, so too the first Christians were surprised that the Gentiles would receive the salvation God offered through Christ. In today's second reading from Paul's letter to the Romans, we hear the apostle Paul considering this same concern.

The faith that the Canaanite woman expresses is an affirmation of and confidence in God's abundant mercy. Yes, salvation comes through Israel, but it overflows for the benefit of all.

AUGUST 20, 2023 – Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

We have to take Jesus up on the invitation to become His Disciples by the way we live our lives. God knows we will not always get this right. We may choose selfishness and stay in our comfort zones at times. But God is patient and merciful with us when we falter. He wants to lead us to the joy of Heaven. We must be strong in faith and live our lives as an act of love and gratitude to Him. We must allow Him to transform us. This is what the stewardship way of life is meant to do and we must accept the difficulties and challenges that come it. (CatholicSteward.com 7/10/2023)

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Kathryn Barczak, James Bauer, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czyrnik, Clara Dudash, Verne Esposito, James Golby, Alicia Junghans, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Rowen Ream, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobecky, Leona Sutt, Joe Torchia, Patricia Twardziak, David Watson, Sheila Weppner, Mark Wojno, Barbara Yesh.

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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**, **Major Aaron Donahey**, US Army, Poland.; **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; **Sgt. Adken Torchia**, US Army, Fort Drum, NY;; **Capt. Kenneth Yacynych**, US Army, Fort Hood; **Sgt. Elliott Mulvehill**, USMC, Ginowan, Japan.; **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; **Jonathan McClain**, Warrant Officer, U.S. Army, Fort Drum, NY; **Tech Sgt. Daniel Bracken**; **Senior Airman Jeremy Williams**

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.

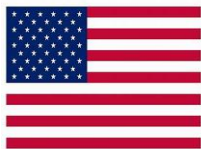
A PRAYER FOR OUR DEPLOYED MILITARY: Heavenly Father, inspire those who are overseas for the cause of peace. Send Your Son, Jesus Christ, as the Prince of Peace. Bless the men and women of our military who respond to the needs of peacekeeping. Keep them safe from harm. Let them be models of discipline 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.



PRAYER FOR OUR NATION – God our Father, Giver of Life, we entrust the United States of America to Your loving Care. You are the rock on which this nation was founded. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Reclaim this land for Your Glory and dwell among Your People. Send us Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our nation’s leaders. Open their minds to the great worth of human life and the responsibilities that accompany human freedom.

Remind Your people that true happiness is rooted in seeking and doing Your will. Through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of our land, grant us the courage to reject the “culture of death.” Lead us into a new millennium of life. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.