

**March 10, 2024**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of 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**  
**Fax: 814 - 539-5888 Email - [sfassisich@atlanticbbn.net](mailto:sfassisich@atlanticbbn.net)**  
**Facebook - [St. Francis of Assisi](#)**  
**Oremus Ministry (Prayer Chain) - 814-539-1632**  
**Web Site: <http://www.stfrancisofassisiatown.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 - Robert Bimeal**  
**Cemetery Council President - William Heim - 254- 2942**  
**Director of Religious Education - Deacon Bruce Becker**  
**Men's Club President - Philip Scott**  
**Rosary Society - Cecilia Neiderer**  
**Gabriel Project - 814-418-1813**

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

**[Alternative to Abortion - Precious Life Inc. \(814\)269-4391; Domestic Violence Hotline - Victim Services \(814\)288-4961;](#)**  
**[Suicide Prevention Hotline - \(814\)535-8531 or 1-877-268-9463; St. Vincent DePaul \(814\)535-8521](#)**

**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** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

**LAND OF PEACE** – a nonprofit organization will be with us speaking about the Christian situation in the Holy Land and selling Crucifixes, religious artwork, and rosaries- all made of olive wood which is native to Israel and Bethlehem. Since tourism has greatly depleted, Christian families in the Holy Land, who depend on tourists, have been greatly affected. The goal of this mission is to help the poor and needy families in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Sale of these goods will help them very much and also give you the opportunity to have “something” authentic from the Holy Land. Please browse and buy some articles. It is for a good cause and also a help to your personal devotion. see Website: [www.landofpeace.org](http://www.landofpeace.org)

**DONATIONS OF BAKED GOODS** – Anyone that is willing to donate any baked goods for our next Fish Fry on Friday March 15, you can drop them off at the Parish Office during office hours or Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> between 10AM – 11AM and on Friday after 10AM.

**NO LIGHTING CANDLES** – Please do NOT light any 6-day candles and 4 hour votive candles after Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. No candles should be lit from Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup> (Palm Sunday) through Holy Week until after the Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday (March 30<sup>th</sup>).

**MEAT/CASH RAFFLE –MARCH 23<sup>rd</sup> – ST. FRANCIS ACTIVITY CENTER – Tickets are \$10** and includes Kielbasa, Hot Dogs, Kraut, Macaroni Salad, Baked Beans and Coffee & Soda. Beer bracelets will be available for \$5.00. **\$100 given away every hour, \$250 at 9:00 PM.** Qualifiers, 50/50 & Paddle Wheel Tickets! Doors open at 5:00PM and will run from 6:00PM – 9:00PM. Tickets will be for sale before and after all weekend Masses. Reserve a table for \$10.00(Max of 8 people at a table) **Ham, Kielbasa, Bacon & Cheese will be raffled off!!!**

**NO CCD CLASS** – There will be **NO CCD CLASS on Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup> for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday!**

**ST. FRANCIS FISH FRY** – St. Francis of Assisi will have a **Fish Fry on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**, at the Activity Center, corner of D Street and Barron Avenue. **A LUNCH SPECIAL (Fried Fish Sandwich and French Fries, NO SUBSTITUTIONS) will be offered from 11AM until 1:00 PM (TAKE OUT ONLY).**



The full menu will be served from **2:00PM – 6:00PM, eat-in or take-out. Orders for lunch and dinner will be taken from 9:00AM until 1:00PM on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> by calling 814-539-3518.** We welcome walk-ins, but strongly suggest that orders be placed in advanced. Meals will be served while supplies last. All help is greatly appreciated!! **CREDIT CARDS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED!**

**CHILDREN'S EASTER PARTY** – Will be held on Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at St. Francis Activity Center from 2:00 – 4:00 PM. Please sign-up in the Main Vestibule on the sign-up sheet. If anyone is willing to volunteer and/or donate cookies & juice boxes, please contact Heather at (814)243-0715.

**SEDER MEAL** – Sign-up sheet for the Seder Meal is in the Main Vestibule. It will be held on March 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:00PM at the Activity Building. We ask that you bring a covered dish. The Church will provide the Paschal Lamb and meat.

**SIGHT & SOUND ~ “DANIEL”** – St. Francis will be taking a Bus Trip to Sight & Sound to see “Daniel” on Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, show time is 3:00 PM. More info will come in the near future. If you have any questions, please contact Fran King at (814)536-3667.

**NEEDED: ALTAR SERVERS, LECTORS, & EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION** – If you are interested in participating in one or more of these Ministries, please contact the Parish Office (814)539-1632.

**CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK:** Loose – \$158.00; Adults – \$4,040.25; Monthly – \$815.00; Candles – \$200.50; Mandeville – \$5.00; Holy Thursday – \$20.00; Good Friday – \$20.00; Easter – \$70.00; Easter Flowers – \$424.00; Online Giving – \$183.50 – Total Collection – \$5,936.25

## **Background on the Gospel Reading**

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is sometimes called *Laetare* Sunday. *Laetare* is a Latin word that means “rejoice.” Traditionally, Sundays are named after the first word of the Liturgy’s opening antiphon. On this Sunday, the antiphon is taken from the book of the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 66:10-11). Even as we observe our Lenten sacrifices, we rejoice in anticipation of the joy that will be ours at Easter.

Today’s Gospel reading is taken from John’s Gospel. It consists of two parts. The first part is the final sentence of Jesus’ reply to Nicodemus, the Pharisee who approached Jesus at night. Nicodemus acknowledged Jesus as Someone Who had come from God and seemed to want to be a follower of Jesus. Jesus greeted Nicodemus with the observation that one must be born from above to see the Kingdom of God. The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus that followed was about the meaning of this phrase. Nicodemus misunderstood Jesus at every point, but there was no animosity in the questions he posed to Jesus.

In the part of the conversation with Nicodemus in today’s Gospel, Jesus referred to an incident reported in the Old Testament. When the Israelites grumbled against the Lord during their sojourn in the desert, God sent venomous serpents to punish them for their complaints. The Israelites repented and asked Moses to pray for them. The Lord heard Moses’ prayer and instructed him to make a bronze serpent and mount it on a pole. All who had been bitten by a serpent and then looked upon the bronze serpent were cured. By recalling this story, Jesus alludes to the Salvation that would be accomplished through His Death and Resurrection.

The second part of today’s Gospel is a theological reflection on Jesus’ Words to Nicodemus. The Gospel of John is known for this kind of reflection offered within the narrative. The words of the Evangelist are in continuity with the words of the prologue to John’s Gospel. In these reflections, John elaborates on a number of themes that are found in his Gospel: light and darkness, belief and unbelief, good and evil, salvation and condemnation.

In John’s reflection, we find an observation about human sinfulness. Jesus is the light that has come into the world, but people preferred the darkness. We wish to keep our sins hidden, even from God. Jesus has come into the world to reveal our sins so that they may be forgiven. This is the Good News; it is the reason for our rejoicing in this season of Lent and throughout our lives.

### **March 10, 2024 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

Our readings today remind us that Jesus came into the world, suffered, and died for each one of us. It is a profound truth that we often forget through the busyness of life. Jesus came for you.

We must realize that it was not out of good works on our part that He did this for us, but out of pure love. When we recognize that His love does not waver in any circumstance, we become overwhelmed with gratitude. How can we respond to this? By loving Him in return – in our thoughts, in how we spend our time, in how we treat others most especially our families, in how we spend our resources. Everything we do should be a reflection of our love for God. Then we will become a light of Christ in the world.

During these last weeks of Lent, let us examine our hearts for the times we have turned away from God, whether it be just a moment or years of distance from our Lord. Then let us bring all of those impurities to God, with a sorrowful heart and a resolution to change, in the Sacrament of Confession. May we reflect on just how much God loves us despite our shortcomings and may we strive to love Him in return each day.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND**

James Edward Adams, Kathryn Barczak, James Bauer, Sally Becker, Richard Bender, 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, David Watson, Sheila Weppner, Mark Wojno, Nancy Wojno, Faryn Wolff, Barbara Yesh.

=====

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Class Heather L. Dovala**, Great Lakes, IL.; **Sgt. Jarod Pisarchik**, Army National Guard; **LCDR Kara Yingling**, San Diego; **LCDR Shannon Yingling**; **Tech Sgt. Devon Gilbert**, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; **Senior Airman Daniel Christner**, USAF, 193<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Wing; **Lt. Col Steven Thomas**, USAF, deploying to the Middle East; **Captain Colin Harrington**, US Army, Bethesda, MD; **2<sup>nd</sup> 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; **SSgt Elliott Mulvehill**, USMC, Birmingham, AL.; **Kasey Meredith**, O.C.S., USMC, Quantico, VA; **Cpl. Aunna Yingling**, US Army; **Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, Gage Pollino**, US Navy; **Pvt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Daylee Ragno**, US Army, E-3 Paratrooper, Fort Bragg, NC; **SPC Morgan Rullo**, ARNG Camp Buehring, Kuwait; **Fr. William Appel**, Navy Chaplain; **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?

=====

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

**PRO LIFE VIGIL - is held weekly on Thursday, at 11:00AM 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.



