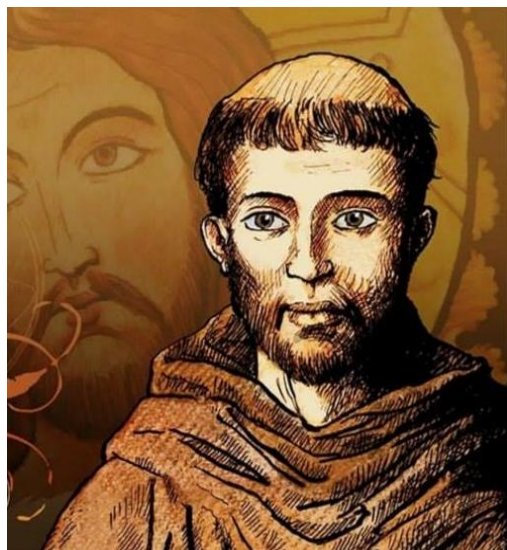


March 23, 2025
3rd Sunday of Lent
THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

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
Facebook – [St. Francis of Assisi](https://www.facebook.com/St.FrancisofAssisi)
Oremus Ministry (Prayer Chain) – 814-539-1632
Web Site: <http://www.stfrancisofassisijohnstown.com>
Parish Secretary – Megan Billow
Office Hours – 9:00 AM to 2:45 PM – Mon. thru Thurs.
Parish Council President –
Finance Council President – Robert Bimeal
Cemetery Council President – William Heim – 254- 2942
Men’s Club President – Philip Scott
Rosary Society – Cecilia Neiderer
Gabriel Project – 814-418-1813
Asst. DRE – Deacon Bruce Becker

MASS SCHEDULE – Monday – 9:00AM, Tuesday – 6:15PM, Wednesday – Saturday – 9:00AM
Saturday Vigil– 4:00PM, Sunday – 7:30AM & 9:30AM – Holy Day – 5:30 PM

[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 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

ALTAR SERVERS, EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS & LECTORS NEEDED FOR EASTER – We are in need of Altar Servers, Eucharistic Ministers & Lectors for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil & Easter Sunday. Please sign-up in the Main Vestibule.

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES COLLECTION – Next weekend, March 29th & 30th, our Parish will take up The Catholic Relief Services Collection. Funds from this collection provide food to the hungry, support displaced refugees, and bring Christ's love and mercy to vulnerable people here and abroad. To learn more about the collection you can visit www.usccb.org/catholic-relief.

MEN'S CLUB CORNHOLE – St. Francis Men's Club will be hosting a Cornhole Tournament on Sunday, March 23rd at the Activity Center at 134 Barron Avenue. Registration starts at 12 Noon and games start at 1:00PM. \$5.00 entry fee. Men, Women, Couples and Singles welcome! Payouts for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams! Food & Drinks available. Bring your own beer!

SIGHT & SOUND BUS TRIP – on August 5th to see "NOAH" at a 3:00 PM show time. For more details, please contact Fran King at (814)536-3667. RSVP no later than June 1st.

SEDER MEAL – Sign-up sheet for the Seder Meal is in the Main Vestibule. It will be held on Thursday, April 17th at 5:00PM at the Activity Building. We ask that you bring a covered dish. The Church will provide the Paschal Lamb and meat.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI LENTEN FISH FRY – St. Francis of Assisi Parish will have a Fish Fry on Friday, April 4, 2025 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 1:00PM (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 1:00 PM on the day of the fish fry by calling 814-539-3518. We welcome walk-ins, but strongly suggest that orders be placed in advance. Meals will be served while supplies last.



CHILDREN'S EASTER PARTY – Will be held on Sunday, April 13th at St. Francis Activity Center from 1:00 – 3:00 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.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COFFEE ORDERS – We are selling St. Francis Coffee for Easter. Order forms are in the Main Vestibule. Orders are due to the Parish Office no later than Monday, March 31st. Pickup will be the weekend of April 5th and 6th after each Mass.

PRAYER FOR THE HEALING OF POPE FRANCIS – Lord, we lift up Pope Francis to You, asking for Your healing touch upon his body and spirit. Grant him strength, comfort, and restoration, as he continues to serve Your Church with faith and love. May Your peace surround him and Your grace guide his recovery. We trust in Your mercy and ask that You bless him with health and vitality, so he may continue to lead us in Your truth. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

YOUNG ADULT GROUP (18-39) – We are excited to welcome Most Reverend William Waltersheid, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, to speak at Theology on Tap on March 26th at the Boulevard Grill in Johnstown at 6pm as well as Catholic Author Mike Aquilina on April 30th. All young adults aged 18-39 are invited to join us! For more information contact Geoffrey Stumpo at (814) 659-7415 or geoffstumpo@gmail.com.

CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK – Loose – \$122.00; Adults – \$3,271.25; Monthly – \$200.00; Candles – \$154.00; Easter Flowers – \$15.00; Mandeville – \$37.00; Donation – \$50.00; Online Giving – \$335.00 – Total Collection – \$4,184.25

Background on the Gospel Reading

Now into the third week of the Season of Lent, our Sunday Gospel prepares us to hear Lent's call to conversion and repentance. Today's reading is found in the chapters of Luke's Gospel that describe Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. During this journey, Jesus teaches and heals. He must also respond to those who question and challenge His authority and actions. There is no parallel in Mark's or Matthew's Gospels for today's reading from Luke. While Mark and Matthew describe an incident in which Jesus curses the fig tree, today's reading makes the barren fig tree the subject of a parable.

Luke tells us that some among the crowds report to Jesus a massacre of Galileans by Pilate. The intention of the crowd seems to be to ask Jesus to explain why these people suffered. It was commonplace to render people's suffering as evidence of their sinfulness. Jesus challenges this interpretation. Those who were massacred were no more or less sinful than the ones who report the situation to Jesus. Jesus replies that even a fatal accident, a natural disaster, ought not to be interpreted as punishment for sin.

Jesus' words at first appear to have a fire-and-brimstone quality. Jesus says in essence, "Repent or perish as these people did; all are sinful before God and deserving of God's punishment." The tone changes, however, in the parable that follows. The parable of the barren fig tree contrasts the patience and hopefulness of the gardener with the practicality of the property owner. When told to cut down the fig tree because it is not producing fruit, the gardener counsels patience. If properly tended, the barren fig tree may yet bear fruit.

Throughout His journey to Jerusalem, Jesus has been teaching about the Kingdom of God. In this parable, we find an image of God's patience and hopefulness as He prepares His Kingdom. God calls us to repent, and it is within His power to punish us for our failure to turn from our sinfulness. And yet God is merciful. He delays punishment and tends to us so that we may yet bear the fruit He desires from us.

This, then, is our reason for hope: Not only does God refuse to abandon us, He chooses to attend to us even when we show no evidence of His efforts. Next week's Gospel will give an even clearer picture of the kind of mercy that God shows to us.

March 23, 2025 – 3rd Sunday of Lent

Today's readings capture the essence of God's Lenten message to us, His people, offering words of compassion and mercy as well as warning of the need to repent and make the most of the gift of time He has given us.

Jesus offers the parable of the unfruitful fig tree to further illustrate this truth. The owner of the orchard came searching for fruit on a fig tree he had planted in his orchard. Finding no fruit on the tree after three years, he told the gardener to cut it down. But the gardener intercedes and asks for one more year to cultivate and fertilize the tree in hopes it would bear fruit in the future. The fig tree was not dying, it simply wasn't doing much of anything at all. Can this be said of us and our lives at times as well?

The season of Lent is a time to reflect carefully on the way we spend our time. Do we give first priority to God, tending to our spiritual growth and sacramental life with diligence? Do we give next priority to our loved ones, focusing intentionally on them each day without distractions from phones, screens, or thoughts of work? If not, now is the moment to repent of our waste of time or of misplaced priorities on our use of time. God is merciful but just. Let's turn to Him and ask Him to make our lives fruitful while we still have time to do so.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Kathryn Barczak, James Bauer, Deacon Bruce Becker, Sally Becker, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czzyrnik, Alicia Junghans, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Rowen Ream, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobacky, Leona Sutt, Joe Torchia, David Watson, Sheila Weppner, Mark Wojno, Nancy Wojno, Faryn Wolff, 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; Lt. Col. Melinda Rován 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, Fort Moore, Savannah, 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; Tech Sgt. Devon Gilbert, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; 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; SSgt Elliott Mulvehill, USMC, Birmingham, AL.; 1st Lt. Kasey Meredith, USMC, Camp Lejeune, NC; 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; 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 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.

