

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 11 - December 17

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Monday, 12/11 | 9:00 a.m. William English |
| Tuesday, 12/12 | 9:00 a.m. Radsly Opravil |
| Wednesday, 12/13 | 9:00 a.m. William Kolacy 7:30 p.m. Karen Iwan |
| Thursday, 12/14 | 9:00 a.m. Don Smith |
| Friday, 12/15 | 9:00 a.m. Deceased Members of the McCormick Family |
| Saturday, 12/16 | 9:00 a.m. Deceased Members of the Lacava & Jamgochian Families 5:00 p.m. Angel Andrada |
| Sunday, 12/17 | 8:00 a.m. Adela Canino 9:30 a.m. Carmen Pasqual Vicente 11:15 a.m. Elsie DiBartolo 5:00 p.m. <i>Pro populo</i> |

+ In Memoriam Aeternam +

In your charity, please pray for the repose of the souls of Richard Younkins, husband of Chris Lee, Captain Walter Chimiak father of Monsignor Karl Chiamiak, William Dormer.

Please pray for the sick....Dennis Parnell, Jackie Komlo, Maureen Hurley, Ed Dudenhoeffer, Bob Coyne, Evelyn Haddad, Carolyn Speaks, Bart Trickett, Katrina Schmidt, Bienvenido Delrosario, Jackie Roebuck King, Jeni Stepanek.. (Names will remain on this list for four consecutive weeks, but can be repeated by calling the Office.)

Readings for the Week of December 10, 2017

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sunday: | Is 40:1-5, 9-11/Ps 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 [8]/2 Pt 3:8-14/Mk 1:1-8 |
| Monday: | Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9& 10, 11-12, 13-14 [Is 35:4f]/Lk 5:17-26 |
| Tuesday: | Zec 2:14-17 /Jdt 13:18bcde, 19 [15:9d]/ Lk 1:26-38 |
| Wednesday: | Is 40:25-31/Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 & 10 [1]/ Mt 11:28-30 |
| Thursday: | Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1 & 9, 10-11, 12-13ab [8]/ Mt 11:11-15 |
| Friday: | Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 & 6 [cf. Jn 8:12]/ Mt 11:16-19 |
| Saturday: | Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2ac & 3b, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/Mt 17:9a, 10-13 |
| Next Sunday: | Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 [Is 61:10b]/1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28 |

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

On December 2, 2017 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement as the U.S. Senate passed its tax reform bill. Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice Florida, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development called for Congress to fix fundamentally flawed tax policies as the House of Representatives and Senate attempt to reach agreement on a final bill. Here is the full statement:

"Today, the U.S. Senate passed its tax reform legislation, and it will now be reconciled with the House of Representatives' passed bill in an effort to reach agreement on the details of a final piece of legislation. Congress must act now to fix the fundamental flaws found in both bills, and choose the policy approaches that help individuals and families struggling within our society.

We are reviewing the final Senate bill and will soon provide analysis about key improvements that are necessary before a final agreement should be reached and move forward. For the sake of all people—but especially those we ought, in justice, to prioritize—Congress should advance a final tax reform bill only if it meets the key moral positions outlined in our previous letters."

On October 25, 2017, Bishop Dewane wrote both to Senators and the Representatives about the fact that tax revenues and public spending take on crucial economic importance for every civil and political community. The goal to be sought is public financing that is itself capable of becoming an instrument of development and solidarity. He offered six moral principles to assist them in their deliberations. I want to go over three of these principles now as they are an excellent application of Catholic Social Teaching. I'll cover the other three points next week.

1. Care for the poor. The U.S. Bishops have long emphasized that "[t]he tax system should be continually evaluated in terms of impact on the poor" (*Economic Justice for All* ["EJA"], 202). Complex economic systems admit of many variables, and certainly about how tax policy will play out over time can be elusive, requiring prudent and honest projections. What should be certain is that the risks associated with tax policy ought not be borne by the most vulnerable. The poor should not be burdened with income taxation as they struggle to meet their daily needs, and programs designed to support them and lift them out of poverty must be adequately funded.

2. Family formation and strengthening. Pope Francis has stressed that "[t]hose services which society offers its citizens are not a type of alms, but rather a genuine 'social debt' with respect to the institution of the family, which is foundational and which contributes to the common good." Instruments of the tax code that benefit the family such as the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax are especially important. These credits should be increased, and those increases be made refundable so that the benefits can reach the poorest families, including the working poor. The "United Framework" indicates that the so-called "marriage penalty" for the Child Tax Credit will be eliminated. Removing financial barriers to marriage is essential to family formation and well-being

Continued in the column to the right.....

The Second Sunday of Advent

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

In what ways do I feel parched, spiritually or emotionally? How can Jesus' presence satisfy my thirst? How can I prepare myself for Christ's presence?

IT'S TIME TO RETURN THE SPIRIT TREE GIFTS

If you took a name or two from the Spirit Giving Tree, then it's time to bring back your gifts for parishioners in need at Assumption Parish in Washington DC. The gifts are due back to the Gathering Space on December 9 and 10 and should be wrapped and affixed with the gift tag that was attached to the ornament. Your generosity is much appreciated! For more information about the Spirit Giving Tree Program or to help process the gifts received, please contact Spirit Giving Tree Ministry Coordinator Bobbi McLaughlin at bobbienmcl@comcast.net.

REMINDER: PARISH PENANCE SERVICE MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

Please join us for the Parish Penance Service at 7:00 p.m. Monday, December 11, in the church. Come start the Christmas season with a clear conscience, so Jesus Christ can fully enter into your heart! For more information, contact the Parish Office at (301) 840-1407.

MASS TO PRAY FOR ALL THOSE AFFECTED BY ADDICTION DISEASE

Saturday, December 16, 9:00 a.m. at St. Francis

This Mass is offered for the intentions of all those coping with the many challenges of addiction disease. Please celebrate Mass with us to pray for the hope and healing of all those affected by the need to overcome addiction disease and its aftermath.

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

Please stop by the St. Clare Room after Mass this weekend to have your blood pressure checked. (Saturday, 5:00 p.m., Sunday, 8:00, 9:30, 11:15 a.m. Masses)

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

3. **Progressivity of the tax code.** St. John XXIII wrote, "In a system of taxation based on justice and equity it is fundamental that the burdens be proportioned to the capacity of people contributing" (*Mater et Magistra*, 132). The common good and the stability of society require that the tax code include progressive elements designed to recognize the means of individuals and families, as well as the economic inequality present in society, and apportion tax burdens accordingly. The "United Framework" states that the revised tax code will be "at least as progressive as the existing tax code" and that it "does not shift the tax burden from high-income to lower- and middle-income taxpayers." These principles are essential for justice and must be key features of any tax reform.

Until next week,
Fr. John Dillon

RCIA

The Rite of Acceptance and Welcoming will be celebrated at the 11:15 a.m. Mass today. This is the first of the public rites celebrated during the RCIA process. Today our inquirers become catechumens (those to be baptized) or candidates (already baptized) and move into the Period of the Catechumenate. During this important ritual, the inquirers will publicly declare their intention to continue their journey toward full initiation in the Catholic Church. Members of the St. Francis community, represented by the sponsors, have a vital role in this journey by offering its support, witness, and prayer to these candidates and catechumens. Please pray for our Catechumens, Joshua Gardner, David O'Steen, Mateo Choza, Ayana Choza and our Candidates, Annalee Antalán and Jeremy Byamugisha.

NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED TO THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

As previously announced during Mass, Fr. John Dillon has appointed seven new members to the Pastoral Council for three-year terms that start January 1, 2018. He decided to appoint the new members because two candidates who had previously presented their names for a Pastoral Council election removed themselves from contention. The new members who will begin their terms to advise the pastor of St. Francis are:

- Justin Fitzgerald
- Charles Gictohi
- Mark Harang
- Daniel Kosciński
- Bernard McGuire Jr.
- Alec Niedermaier
- Travis Tomon

Please see the new members' pictures in the Gathering Space.

2017 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

To receive credit in 2017, your contributions must be dated December 31, 2017. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be received in the parish Office on or before Wednesday, January 3, 2018. As a reminder, the parish statement of contributions will not include your FAITHDIRECT contributions. You will receive a statement directly from FAITHDIRECT.

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING Join the Lamb of God Prayer Group for worship and the study of Scripture on Tuesday, December 12, 7:30 p.m., St. Clare's Chapel in the Rectory. For details, please call Louise, (301) 977-5217.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next weekend will go to the UMAN (Upper Montgomery Assistance Network). *Thank you for your generosity.*

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PRAYER CHAIN If you have a prayer request, please contact Marianne Bullen, (301) 963-3420 or mariannebu@comcast.net with your requests.

ROSARY FOR PRIESTS

Every Wednesday evening at 6:45 p.m. we pray the rosary for our priests before the 7:30 p.m. Mass.

HOLY HOUR FOR THE DYING

On Thursday evenings in the St. Clare's Chapel in the Rectory, a prayer group meets at 7:00 p.m. to pray for the dying. This is a Holy Hour Devotion for the Dying. As a central work of our Catholic faith, we are called to pray for the dying, especially for those who may die suddenly, unprepared to face God. For additional information, please call the Parish Office, (301) 840-1407.

ROSARY CENACLE OF OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE
Cenacle of Our Lady, Queen of Peace to pray for priests and vocations, 2:00 p.m. in the St. Clare's Chapel (Rectory) every Sunday. Please join us.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS - COUNCIL 2323

The Knights of Columbus are actively pursuing new members. Our council incorporates members from St. Francis, St. Mary's and St. Martin's. Though best known for our many charitable projects, we also have a lot of fun with dinners, fund raisers, family nights, and many other fraternal social occasions. If interested in learning more, please contact Gary Palmer, (301) 948-6494 or e-mail gtdbpalmer@verizon.net.

UPDATE ON THE NEIGHBOR-TO-NEIGHBOR TEAM

After mailing more than 1,800 Welcome to the Neighborhood cards featuring our Advent and Christmas activities to homeowners who have recently moved into the area around St. Francis of Assisi Parish, the Neighbor to Neighbor team is working on a postcard that can be sent to new households within 30 days after they move to the area. It will be an "evergreen" card that may include a welcome from Fr. John, Mass and reconciliation times, offering of house/apartment blessings, and our web site URL. Content will include information in which new homeowners might be interested, such as religious education and pictures of parishioners. The look and feel will be aligned with other St. Francis marketing peripherals, such as the car magnet.

The team is also working on a pew card that could invite first-time visitors to connect with the parish and an effort to reach out to formerly active parishioners.

The Neighbor to Neighbor Team always welcomes new members who feel called to assist in this outreach effort. For more information, contact Deacon Dan Finn at deacondanfinn@gmail.com.

SCHEDULE FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

Since the Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on Christmas Eve this year, Catholic churches will be hard at work preparing to celebrate the final Sunday of Advent and the Christmas Vigil Masses on the same day. Here is the complete schedule of Masses--along with the type of music that will be performed--on December 24 and 25 at St. Francis of Assisi Church:

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Sunday, December 24:

5 p.m. Saturday: Cantor and Organ

8 a.m. Sunday: Cantor and Organ

9:30 a.m. Sunday: Trio

11:15 a.m.: Sunday: Contemporary Group

Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24:

4 p.m. Sunday: Children's Choir and Youth Band

6 p.m. Sunday: Family Band

8 p.m. Sunday: Women's Trio and Cello

10 p.m. Sunday: Christmas Carol Sing (*not a Mass*)

11 p.m. Sunday: Traditional Choir, String Quartet & Trumpet

Christmas, Monday, December 25:

8 a.m. Monday: Cantor, Organ, Cello & Trumpet

9:30 am. Monday: Women's Trio, Cello & Trumpet

11:15 a.m. Monday: Contemporary Group

THANK YOU TO THOSE FOR THEIR COMMIT- MENTS OF TIME, TALENT & TREASURE DURING THE OFFERTORY STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

As the 2017 Offertory Stewardship Appeal winds down, Fr. John Dillon thanks all parishioners who prayed over their blessings and considered whether they could make a new commitment of time, talent and treasure to the parish community in 2018. If you still intend to make a commitment, but have not yet filled out a Commitment Form or a Faith Direct Enrollment Form, then it's not too late. Both forms can still be placed in the collection basket or dropped off at the Parish Office, preferably before the end of December. The return of the forms is highly encouraged, as it will help the Finance Council and parish leaders develop a working budget for the remainder of fiscal year 2018, which ends June 30, 2018. For more information about the Offertory Stewardship Appeal or parish finances, contact Fr. John at jdillon@sfadw.org.

HELP RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

"Your generous contribution helps us to care for our retired sisters and enables our younger sisters to continue in active ministry," writes a religious sister. Your gift to today's Retirement Fund for Religious helps provide medications, nursing care, and more for thousands of senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests. It also helps ensure younger members can continue the good works of their elders!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS/EVENTS

CHRISTMAS STOCKING HELP LINE

Religious Education families are invited to participate in the *Christmas Stocking Help Line*, an Advent project to benefit children and families in need. Items needed will be listed on “stockings” hung in the Parish Center during RE class times beginning November 19. Families may choose to take one or more stockings, purchase the items listed, and return them to RE classes by December 12. Letters with more information about this project will be given to students in RE classes.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE FOR RE STUDENTS

The students in grades 3 - 8 will have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their Religious Education classes in Advent. Catechists will review the Sacrament of Penance in advance, and we encourage parents to talk with their children about the Sacrament as well. Please note the date for your child's session and grade as shown below:

Sunday 9:20 Session:

Grade 3 - Sunday, Dec. 10

Grade 4 - Sunday, Dec. 17

Monday 6:45 Session:

Grades 6, 7 & 8 - Monday, Dec. 11

(participating in the Parish Penance Service starting at 7:00 pm)

Tuesday 6:45 Session:

Grades 6, 7 & 8 - Tuesday, Dec. 12

CATECHESIS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Our parish offers monthly catechetical sessions specifically designed for children and youth with special needs and their families. Our next session is today, Sunday, December 10 from 3:30-4:30 pm in the St. Clare Room. If you would like to learn more about these sessions, or if you are interested in serving as a catechist or aide for children with special needs, please call Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

CATECHISTS AND AIDES NEEDED

Additional volunteers are still needed in our Sunday morning and Monday evening middle school program. Please consider whether you can serve as a catechist or classroom aide for our children and young people. We need your help to keep our class sizes small. If you would like to learn more about this important ministry, please contact Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SNOW CANCELLATION POLICY

If Montgomery County Public Schools are closed, and if schools are dismissed early, Religious Education classes, including FRED, are also cancelled. This applies to Sunday classes as well if Montgomery County Public Schools announces cancellation of weekend school activities. Cancellation announcements will be recorded on the Religious Education Office phone (301-258-9193) and posted on the St. Francis Parish Facebook page (“St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church”) and website. Whenever in doubt, please use your own judgment about local weather and driving conditions, and err on the side of safety when making decisions about bringing your child to class.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS/EVENTS

ST. FRANCIS YOUTH MINISTRY *Upcoming Events*

FRED

DECEMBER

- 10 FRED Movie Night
- 16 Christmas Service Project 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. (must be 14 & up) (Open to FRED & FRED Jr.)
- 17 FRED Christmas Party - all 8th graders are welcome to join

No FRED On December 24th or 31st!
Merry Christmas!

Next Meeting is January 14th!
GET SOCIAL

Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @ SFAFRED.

270CATHOLIC'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Thursday, December 14th, young adults (20s & 30s) are invited to Saint's Row Brewery (1211-1213 Taft Street, Rockville) for a pre-Christmas celebration! Support a Catholic family-owned business and enjoy free pizza! Festive attire is highly encouraged. We will also be having a collection for a local charity. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/270Catholic/events> or you can e-mail 270catholic@gmail.com for more details.

YOUTH BLING SALE

Our FRED teens will be sponsoring a “*Bling*” Sale this weekend. Catholic Jewelry and Rosaries will be available for you to purchase for Christmas gifts. Everything is priced reasonably for you while supporting our Youth Group. Proceeds go to support the 2018 Summer Service Work Camps.

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School

www.StJudeRockville.org

<http://www.facebook.com/stjuderockvillemd>

St. Jude Regional Catholic School

Cordially Invites You to **Our Annual Christmas Program** Performances by the SJRCS Band, Class Performances (Pre-K 4 through 4th Grade), and 5th Grade Musical “Room for Christmas”. This light-hearted, humor-filled Christmas pageant musical focuses our attention on the joy and wonder that comes from “making room” for what really matters at Christmas. Monday, December 11, 1:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. Thaddeus Room. Toy donation to benefit St. Ann's Child Care. Toys can be donated at each performance of the Christmas Program.

RE-ENROLLMENT FOR THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR IS OPEN - All current families are asked to re-enrollment for the 2018-2019 school. Please take a moment to register by following the links on our school website at www.stjuderockville.org. Go to Admission, then Apply Online, then Enrollment: [TADS: Online Registration and Enrollment](#). Current families planning on enrolling children in grades PK-3 or Kindergarten should do so before January 2. Only current school families are being allowed to enroll new students prior to January 2. Open enrollment for new families begins on January 2, 2018. During Open Enrollment applications will be taken on a first come first serve basis.

TWO ADVENT FUNDRAISERS STILL GOING STRONG

Two of St. Francis of Assisi's most beloved fundraisers – the Christmas Tree Sale and the Alternative Christmas Gift Card Program – are still seeking support from St. Francis parishioners, who want to trim a sweet-smelling Fraser Fir and help support beneficiaries at area charities.

The annual Christmas Tree Sale continues to go strong, with just one more week left to sell inventory. Come buy a Fraser Fir ranging from a 3' tabletop to a 10' tree. The sale also features freshly decorated Christmas wreaths and 75' of white pine roping. Volunteers are still needed for shifts, so if you have some free time to sell trees, contact Christmas Tree Sale Ministry Coordinator Brian Petit at brianpettit@pettitcompanies.com.

Also continuing next weekend is the Alternative Christmas Gift Card Program, which allows parishioners to buy services or experiences for beneficiaries at area charities. The popular program helps de-emphasize the highly commercial influences at Christmas. The cards can be purchased in the Gathering Space the weekend of December 16/17 or brought to the Parish Office by Monday, December 18.

For more information, contact Alternative Christmas Gift Card ministry leaders: Pat O'Connor and leafs20879@aol.com and Doris Chung at dichung14@gmail.com.

SFA HEALTH MINISTRY

Encouraging health and well-being in body, mind and spirit

Compassionate Friends: The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is an international grief support organization. TCF offers friendship and understanding to parents who come together to learn how to cope with the pain and grief of having a child die. We do not have professional therapists, just other parents who understand what it means to suffer the tragedy of losing a child. The Montgomery County Chapter meets monthly on each first Tuesday.

Location: Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac, MD 20854

Date and Time: 7:00 p.m. January 2, 2018.

For additional information: Contact Barbara or George Beall at (301) 253-8740 or at oldedish@starpower.net. (George and Barbara are St. Francis parishioners, whose youngest child and daughter died in 2004. They are available to speak with parents at any time, night or day.)

Montgomery Hospice Workshops for Grieving People

Workshops are open to all who live or work in Montgomery County. Montgomery Hospice has an experienced, professional counselor as a co-facilitator in each bereavement group discussion or workshop.

Location: Montgomery Hospice, 1355 Piccard Drive, Rockville.

Registration: (301) 921-4400. Registration required on first-come, first-serve basis. Call to register early.

December 11, 2017 - Workshop: "Winter Blues: Balancing Sorrow and Celebration while Grieving," 1-2:30 p.m.

December 11, 2017 and December 18, 2017 - Two-session workshop: "For Men Only: Getting a Handle on Your Grief," for men mourning the death of a loved one. 6:30-8 p.m.

January 4, 2018 - Drop-in discussion about grief and healing: 1-2:30 p.m.

January 9, 2018 - Workshop: "Grieving Mentally," 6:30-8 p.m.

SFA HEALTH MINISTRY

*Encouraging health and well-being in body, mind and spirit
continued.*

When all is NOT merry and bright....

There is a lot of pressure on people to enjoy themselves during the holidays. The reality, however, is that many people, especially our elderly, are grieving a loss and become isolated and unhappy during the Christmas season.

The focus on family, friends and togetherness during this time of year can actually bring melancholy feelings to the forefront for those whose loved ones and friends have fallen ill or passed away. For our seniors, diminished energy and mobility limit participation in holiday events leaving even those well enough to remain in their own homes feeling lonely. If this is the case for your parent, spouse, friend or neighbor you can take some steps to help lift their spirits.

- Make a point of actively listening when they want to talk, even if the discussion is negative. An honest and empathetic conversation can help them process what is bothering them, whether they are mourning a loss or coming to terms with new challenges in their life. It may also reveal why they are feeling down and help you devise other ways to lift their spirits. **Just having someone to talk to can go a long way toward relieving depression.**
- Remind them of their importance at annual holiday celebrations. Encourage them to do what they are capable of, and be ready to embrace their contribution to show them they are loved.
- Over the years, holiday cards often bring bad news and diminish in quantity. Persons are keenly aware of the people from whom they no longer hear. Be gentle with your loved ones if these annual greetings are an important tradition. If possible, ask others to send a card to keep the senior's seasonal mail more upbeat. Offer to help her write outgoing cards.
- Ignore the increasing hype over the food, gifts, decorations and parties to **focus on the people and values that you cherish. Thank them for teaching you the importance of family and friendship.**
- Activities with younger generations can be very uplifting for an elder who is in physical or emotional pain. If possible, take the senior out to school programs and games, especially if they feature younger family members.
- Many seniors enjoy reflecting on past holidays as they unpack cherished decorations, so be sure to listen to their stories and ask about special items.
- When visiting someone in a nursing home, bring treats for your elder to enjoy and share with their friends.
- Ask your elder's friends to come to a small holiday gathering.
- The most important thing you can do with a senior to make them feel loved and included this season is to spend time with them. Look at family photos, watch home videos or holiday movies, listen to seasonal music, or do crafts together. Regardless of what you decide to do together, your **gift of presence** is the best present of all.