

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 18 - December 24

Monday, 12/18	9:00 a.m. Fr. Ivan Almodovar
Tuesday, 12/19	9:00 a.m. Martin Almodovar
Wednesday, 12/20	9:00 a.m. Rufino Loberiza 7:30 p.m. John Major
Thursday, 12/21	9:00 a.m. Reverend Arne A. Panula
Friday, 12/22	9:00 a.m. Special Intention
Saturday, 12/23	9:00 a.m. Benicio Huaman 5:00 p.m. <i>Pro populo</i>
Sunday, 12/24	8:00 a.m. Tom Proctor (L) 9:30 a.m. Don Smith 11:15 a.m. Allan Becker
Christmas Eve	4:00 p.m. Priests Intentions 6:00 p.m. Priests Intentions 8:00 p.m. Priests Intentions 11:00 p.m. Pro populo

+ In Memoriam Aeternam +

In your charity, please pray for the repose of the souls of Deacon Pascal Hong, Marie Popp, mother of David Popp, James Biedron, father-in-law of Melisa Biedron, Deacon Kevin Butler.

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 17, 2017

Sunday:	Is 61:1-2, 10-11/Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 [Is 61:10b]/1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28
Monday:	Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 [cf. 7]/ Mt 1:18-25
Tuesday:	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 [cf. 8]/Lk 1:5-25
Wednesday:	Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 [cf. 7c and 10b]/Lk 1:26-38
Thursday:	Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 [1a; 3a]/Lk 1:39-45
Friday:	1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd [cf. 1a]/Lk 1:46-56
Saturday:	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14 [cf. Lk 21:28]/Lk 1:57-66
Next Sunday:	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 [2a]/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Figures were not available at the time of publication.

Thank you for your continued support

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

Earlier this month Bishop Frank Dewane of Venice, Florida, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, urged Congress to fix tax policies that were fundamentally flawed as the House of Representatives and Senate tried to reach agreement on a final bill. In November he had written to them and had proposed six moral principles to assist them in their discussion. In my column last week I covered the first three of these principles. In today's column I want to talk about the last three principles.

4. Adequate revenue for the sake of the common good. Resources are required for society to defend and promote the common good. The USCCB has affirmed that "the tax system should raise adequate revenues to pay for the needs of society, especially to meet the basic needs of the poor" (*Economic Justice for All* ("EJA"), 202). In carrying out its responsibilities, "[g]overnments may levy the taxes necessary to meet these responsibilities, and citizens have a moral obligation to pay those taxes" (*EJA*, 123).

5. Avoiding cuts to poverty programs to finance tax reform. The loss of revenue created by tax cuts should not be made up by cuts to programs that serve those most in need. Recent proposals by leaders in Washington indicate an openness to steep cuts to the social safety net and discretionary programs that serve those in poverty. At the same time, Congress is seriously considering increases in military spending. Legislators must avoid creating a situation in which cuts to programs for the poor will be made to seem inevitable and necessary, whether in the short or longer term, in order to make tax cuts possible.

6. Incentivize charitable giving and development. Charitable giving is strongly incentivized in the present tax code, and the "United Framework" states that the charitable giving deduction will be preserved. Perhaps unintentionally, though, the plan risks crippling charitable giving. Academic research predicts a multi-billion dollar drop in charitable giving if the standard deduction were doubled. The elimination of the estate tax would further reduce incentives to give. Tax credits to encourage efforts like the development of affordable housing also appear at risk. Removing the incentives to give to charities, while also cutting anti-poverty programs would doubly burden the most vulnerable members of our communities. Proposals to remedy some of these challenges have been offered and should be seriously considered.

Bishop Dewane recognizes that national tax policy is complex and its effects are far-reaching. He urges Congress to recognize the critical obligation of creating a just framework aimed at economic security of all people, especially the least of these. To learn more about the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching, please use the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/3w69bg6>.

Until next week,
Fr. John Dillon

The Third Sunday of Advent

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How can I bring a “year of favor” to the world, to the community, those I know?

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO INCREASED THEIR GIVING TO OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Thank you to everyone who increased their giving to St. Francis of Assisi Church following the Offertory Stewardship Appeal last month. Indeed I am grateful to everyone for the generosity of their gifts, whether that be in volunteerism, expertise or financial support. By the way, it's not too late to step up and offer a financial gift to the parish. I invite you to return a Commitment Form or Faith Direct Enrollment Form either in the collection basket or to the Parish Office before December 31, so we can continue formulating our budget for the latter half of the fiscal year that ends June 30. ~ Fr. John



**PARISH OFFICES WILL CLOSE
AT 12:00 NOON ON FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 22 AND WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY & TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 25 & 26
FOR CHRISTMAS**

**Merry Christmas from Fr. John, Fr. Jack
& the Parish Staff!**

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

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 a.m. Monday: Women's Trio, Cello & Trumpet
11:15 a.m. Monday: Contemporary Group

No 5:00 p.m. Mass on Christmas Day

LAST WEEKEND TO BUY GIFT CARDS FOR THE ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT PROGRAM

If you'd still like to purchase an Alternative Christmas Gift Card before the holidays, then now is the time to act. All orders for the Alternative Christmas Gift Card Program are due to the Parish Office by Monday, December 18. Please stop by the Alternative Christmas Gift Card table in the Gathering Space this weekend to buy a service or experience for beneficiaries of area charities and help support a less commercial Christmas season. For more information, contact Ministry Coordinators Pat O'Connor at leafs20879@aol.com or Doris Chung at dichung14@gmail.com.

YOUR OFFERTORY CONTRIBUTION

Just a reminder that we do not record loose checks from the weekly collection. In order for us to track your contribution and send you a statement at the end of the year, it is suggested that you sign up for envelopes or Faith Direct. To sign up for envelopes you can call the Parish Office, (301) 840-1407. To sign up for electronic contributions visit www.faihdirect.net. The code for St. Francis is MD110. If you have any questions, please call the Parish Office.

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

December 17, 2017

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING The Lamb of God Prayer Meeting will **NOT** be held Tuesday, December 19. For details, please call Louise, (301) 977-5217.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next week-end will go to the *Prison Ministry Outreach Program*. *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.

RELIGIOUS GIVE THANKS

A religious sister writes, "When we see the generous Response of so many thousands of persons in order to help us, religious men and women, we are left speechless." Senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests across the country send heartfelt thanks and prayers for your donation to last week's Retirement Fund for Religious collection.

ON JANUARY 7, MASS FOR ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE CELEBRATES PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Mass for All of God's People, which especially recognizes people with special needs and developmental differences in our communities, will be held at the 5:00 p.m. Youth Mass, on Sunday, January 7, at our church. St. Francis Special Events Ministry Coordinator Sylvia Jones and her volunteers will host a small reception after the Mass. If you or a person with special needs in your life is interested in serving as a lector, usher, altar server, or Joyful Greeter at the Mass for All of God's People, please contact Sylvia at (301) 762-6564 or by e-mail her at decaf-queen@gmail.com.

CHRISTMAS MASS FOR THE HOMEBOUND

There will be 2 Christmas Masses broadcast on Christmas Day. The taped Christmas Mass will be at 10:00 a.m. on WDCW-50.

- No cable; Dish or Direct TV subscribers: Ch. 50.
- Comcast: Ch. 23 in Washington, DC & Montgomery County; Ch. 3 in Prince George's County and Southern Maryland
- RCN: Ch. 15
- Verizon: Ch. 3

At 12:00 Noon on EWTN the Christmas Mass will be aired live with Donald Cardinal Wuerl as the celebrant.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE THANKSGIVING ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE & REDLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Thank you St. Francis parishioners who participated in the Thanksgiving Ecumenical Prayer Service held at Mill Creek Parish United Methodist Church on November 19. People from the participating congregations turned out for the evening of prayer and fellowship, donating \$900 that will benefit Redland Middle School. These monies will be given to the school to fund special needs programming on behalf of the participating congregations—St. Francis of Assisi, Redland Baptist, Emory Grove and Mill Creek Parish United Methodist Churches and St. Luke Lutheran Church. Administrators at Redland Middle School have extended their thanks for this gift.

~ *Fr. John*

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SORT, HANG UP CLOTHING AT INTERFAITH WORKS CLOTHING CENTER

Interfaith Works needs you! Low-income families and the homeless continue to line up at the doors of the Interfaith Works Clothing Center, ready to shop thanks to the generous clothing and household goods donations from parishioners like you. But the clothing center is struggling to keep up and needs more volunteers to sort and hang the donations, so families get the free merchandise they need. Can you help? Contact Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Rachel Sanborn at rsanborn@iworksmc.org or register on the organization's volunteer page at www.iworksmc.org/volunteer/.

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON TAKES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EVANGELIZATION

For those of you with an interest in social justice, a video by Bishop Robert Barron on "Social Justice and Evangelization" may prove interesting. In it, the auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles draws comparisons between St. Peter Claver, the 17th century humanitarian who cared for the needs of slaves as they arrived in Cartagena, Spain, from Africa and Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher who figures centrally in modern philosophy. See the video at <https://youtu.be/5KaDSS-kK0w>.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS/EVENTS

CHRISTMAS STOCKING HELP LINE

Thank you to our Religious Education families for your generosity in contributing to our *Christmas Stocking Help Line*, an Advent project to benefit children and families served by Catholic Charities in Montgomery County. Items received to date have been picked up for delivery. However, if you still have a gift to return, we will be glad to receive it as RE classes this week and will make sure it is delivered in time for Christmas!

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 as shown below:

Sunday 9:20 Session:

Grade 4 – Sunday, Dec. 17

RE CLASS SCHEDULE AND THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Religious Education classes will meet on a normal schedule this week, December 17, 18 and 19. There are NO Religious Education classes on the following days:

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, December 24, 25 and 26
Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, December 31, January 1 and 2.

Religious Education classes will resume on January 7, 8 and 9.

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREP DAY – SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

Children preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time will attend a day of preparation on Saturday, January 6 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the Parish Center (Snow date: January 13). Please pray for these children who will receive this Sacrament on Saturday, January 20.

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
- 21 Lords Table Soup Kitchen (Open to FRED and FRED Jr.)

No FRED On December 24th or 31st!

Merry Christmas!

Next Meeting is January 14th!

GET SOCIAL

Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @ SFAFRED.

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School

www.StJudeRockville.org

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

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The faculty and staff of St. Jude Regional Catholic School wish you and your family a very blessed Christmas and a faith filled New Year. SJRCS is closed for the Christmas holiday from December 22nd through January 1st.

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.

DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WITH SHOP-WITHSCRIP.COM PROGRAM

Support SJRCS's Tuition Assistant Program while you shop. All the local grocery stores participate in this program! Example: buy a gift card in the amount of \$50 for Giant. You get the full amount of the gift card and St. Jude's gets 4%, which is used to fund the tuition assistance program. Use the gift card to pay for your purchases. Register at www.shopwithscrip.com. SJRCS's Enrollment Code is: F11287E736713

CHRISTMAS WELCOME IN THE PEW

We all have our favorite seats at the dining room or kitchen table. We often have to shift our seats when we sit down to Christmas dinner because there are more people. Some of these people we haven't seen for some time. Some are brand new to our table. Maybe a co-worker or school friend of one of our children who couldn't get home for Christmas will be joining us. It might be a neighbor who is alone for Christmas. We all have been flexible for the feast. And, we go out of our way to try to make the person feel as welcome as we can.

All of us can be encouraged to be flexible when we come to Christmas Mass. Many of our brothers and sisters in the Catholic Family who we have not seen for some time will be with us for the celebration. There may be some who have never been with us in our parish.

For those of us who attend regularly we should move as far to the center of the pew when we come on Christmas. Our usual seat may be on the aisle, but for the sake of "company," these aisle seats should be the last ones filled.

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.

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.

February 13, 2018

A Valentine's Day Workshop: "Forever Yours," 1:30-3 p.m.

A special workshop for widows, widowers and life partners who want to honor and remember their loved ones as a comfort before Valentine's Day. Contact: Linda Horenstein at LHorenstein@montgomeryhospice.org.

FRANCISCAN MONASTERY EVENT

December 2-January 7 Nativities of the World

Nativities of the World, a collection of more than 150 mostly-handcrafted crèches from around the globe, will be on exhibit at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, December 2, 2017-January 7, 2018 (daily 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). Many are folk art, created of local materials, such as nuts, tin foil, straw and felt. See the universality of the Catholic faith through the way different cultures express the birth of Christ. The Monastery is at 1400 Quincy St. NE, Washington, DC 20017. Free parking; near Brookland-CUA Metro/H6 bus toward Ft. Lincoln. Information: myfranciscan.org and 202-526-6800.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT ON THE RESTORATION OF JESUS' TOMB

This exhibit opened in November and will run until August 15, 2018. Journey to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Tomb of Christ in a new, immersive 3-D exhibit at the National Geographic Museum near St. Matthew Cathedral in Washington, DC. "The Tomb of Christ" takes you to Jerusalem and into the church virtually. See the cave walls of Jesus' tomb, hidden for centuries and uncovered during an historic 2016 restoration, and test technology used in the restoration. Get details and group information at nationalgeographic.org/dc/exhibitions/tomb-of-christ.

CATHEDRAL PENANCE SERVICE WITH CONFESSIONS

All are welcome to experience the love of Christ through the Sacrament of Penance at the Advent Communal Penance Service, "Come Home for Christmas," on Tuesday, December 19 at 12:10 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle (1725 Rhode Island Ave., NW, near the Farragut North or Dupont Circle Metro Red Line stops). Fifteen priests, including confessors in American Sign Language, Spanish, and other languages, will be available for individual confessions.

ARE YOU AFFECTED BY SOMEONE ELSE'S ADDICTION?

NAR-ANON offers hope. Nar-Anon Family Groups are a worldwide fellowship for those affected by someone else's addiction. As a twelve step program, we offer help by sharing our experience, strength, and hope. A meeting is held on Wednesday evenings 7:00 p.m., 15886B. Gaither Drive, Gaithersburg. For additional information contact Alison, (301) 963-6640 or visit the website nar-anon.org.

GIVE THE GIFT OF SERVICE

Catholic Charities DC encourages you to give back this holiday season by taking advantage of a variety of volunteer opportunities available in Washington, DC and southern Maryland. For more information on volunteering with Catholic Charities, or to register to volunteer, visit catholiccharitiesdc.org/volunteer.

NATIONAL SHRINE'S CHRISTMAS DINNER FOR THOSE IN NEED

The Basilica of the National Shrine will sponsor dinner for those who are alone or in need on Christmas Day, December 25. Volunteers are needed to assist in preparing, serving, and delivering meals as well as assisting with other logistics. Those interested in volunteering can sign-up online at www.nationalshrine.org/christmasdinner or by calling the Basilica at 202-526-8300.