

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 25 - December 31

Christmas Day	8:00 a.m. Marie & James Galvin 9:30 a.m. Jim O'Connor 11:15 a.m. Tom Proctor (L)
Tuesday, 12/26	9:00 a.m. Joe Lauman (L)
Wednesday, 12/27	9:00 a.m. Rita Arias 7:30 p.m. Dan Whelan (L)
Thursday, 12/28	9:00 a.m. Paul Popernack, Sr.
Friday, 12/29	9:00 a.m. Deacon Francis Hannagan
Saturday, 12/30	9:00 a.m. William English 5:00 p.m. Carla Cosman
Sunday, 12/31	8:00 a.m. Ernesto Meneses 9:30 a.m. Ernesto Meneses 11:15 a.m. <i>Pro populo</i> 5:00 p.m. RE Catechists & Families

+ In Memoriam Aeternam +

In your charity, please pray for the repose of the souls of Monsignor William J. Kane, Andrew Farrell, brother of Terry Farrell, Archdiocese of Washington, Deacon Andrew Picard.

Please pray for the sick.... Dick Hunt, Guy Beaven, 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 24, 2017

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
Monday:	Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 [2a]/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 Midnight: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 [Lk 2:11]/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14 Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 [3c]/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Tuesday:	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 [6]/Mt 10:17-22
Wednesday:	1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 [12]/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Thursday:	1 Jn 1:5--2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8 [7]/Mt 2:13-18
Friday:	1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 [11a]/Lk 2:22-35
Saturday:	1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 [11a]/Lk 2:36-40
Next Sunday:	Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3 /Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9, [7a, 8a] /Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

One of the songs of the Christmas season that I like is "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," which Andy Williams made popular a number of years ago now. One of the reasons that I think that it is the most wonderful time of the year is seeing the selfless generosity of so many people. I think of Bobbi McLaughlin and all her helpers who organize the Spirit Tree and the enormous number of Christmas gifts that our parish gave to the people of Assumption Parish in Southeast Washington. In a similar vein, I think of Susan Anderson, Melisa Biedron, and our catechists who organize the Christmas stocking gift program in collaboration with Catholic Charities. I also think of Pat O'Connor and all her helpers who organize the Alternative Christmas whereby local, national, and international charities receive some assistance from parishioners during this Advent and Christmas season. Or I think of Brian Pettit, Wayne Burnside, and all their helpers who have sold Christmas trees on many cold nights this December. I cannot forget Carolyn Brauer and those who helped her make Christmas wreaths which were available for sale along with the Christmas trees. I am grateful to them and all their helpers—too many to name—for promoting initiatives that help parishioners celebrate Advent and prepare for the birth of Christ in a joyful way. I am also gratified to see once again how generous our parishioners are to people in need. That is why I think that this is "the most wonderful time of the year."

I have been asked three questions by various parishioners that I want to answer in the remaining space that I have in this column for our bulletin that we will distribute on Christmas Eve. The questions concern what are the "O" Antiphons, what is *Las Posadas*, and what is *Simbang Gabi*?

First, let's discuss the "O" Antiphons. From December 17-24, a set of antiphons—all beginning with the word "O" are sung at Evening Prayer before the Gospel canticle known as the *Magnificat*. We have been singing the "O" Antiphons since at least the eighth century. They are the basis of the popular Advent song "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." They use ancient biblical imagery drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim that Christ is the fulfillment not only of Old Testament hopes, but present ones as well. These antiphons also form the text for the Gospel acclamations in the *Lectionary for Mass* on these days.

Las Posadas is an event that essentially covers the same period as the "O" Antiphons. For eight days before Christmas, people wander in procession from home to home looking for a place that will take them in. On each night, a home has been chosen in advance to welcome the procession, and there is much singing and feasting. An image of the Christ child is left in the home until the next night, when the procession begins. *Las Posadas* commemorates the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem and recalls that there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn. In the United States, this Mexican tradition has extended to other Latin American communities, perhaps due to identification with the migration experience of the Holy Family.

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

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How can I take the gift of Jesus that I have been given and share this gift with others?



**PARISH OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY & TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 25 & 26
FOR CHRISTMAS**

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

**MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2018
IS NOT A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION
THIS YEAR.**

We will only have the 9:00 a.m. Daily Mass.

**PARISH OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2018
FOR NEW YEAR.**

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR *continued*

Simbang Gabi (Filipino for "Night Mass") is a traditional nine day novena Mass in anticipation of the birth of the Lord celebrated by Filipinos all over the world. Most churches where this is celebrated are decorated with colorful lights and lanterns to welcome the church goers. The Nativity Scene is displayed in preparation of the birth of Jesus Christ. It shows the baby Jesus in a manger with Mary and Joseph. There are shepherds and farm animals. The complete scenario includes the three wise men carrying their gifts to the Christ child and the star of Bethlehem that guided them on their journey. The tradition of *Simbang Gabi* was introduced in the Philippines by the Spanish friars to allow farmers to attend Mass before going to the fields early in the morning, but it is now often celebrated in the evening. This year *Simbang Gabi* has been celebrated in nine parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Washington.

Merry Christmas!
Fr. John

SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

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

THE GIFT OF ALL GOD'S CHILDREN CELEBRATION MASS

Upcounty Community Resources invites everyone to join us at St. Francis of Assisi during the 5:00 Youth Mass, Sunday, January 7, 2018 to celebrate the Gift of All God's Children in a special Mass for adults and children with developmental differences. There will be a reception in the Gathering Space following the Mass. If you wish to participate in this event as a liturgical reader, greeter, usher, or altar server please contact Sylvia Jones at 301-762-6564. All are welcome.

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.

CROSS CATHOLIC OUTREACH

Fr. Bernard Olszewski will be visiting our parish next weekend to speak at all the Masses on behalf of Cross Catholic Outreach which was founded to create a meaningful link between parishes in America and the priests and nuns working in the church overseas in the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Central and South America.

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING The Lamb of God Prayer Meeting will **NOT** be held Tuesday, December 26. For details, please call Louise, (301) 977-5217.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next week-end will go to *Olney Help*. *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.

THANK YOU FROM THE SHADY GROVE PREGNANCY CENTER

When St. Francis hosts a Baby Bottle Campaign for the Pregnancy Center, you are helping to save lives and support families! Right now, the Center is saving a life every 5 days and families are being supported every day. Thank you for being involved in this mission. St. Francis of Assisi raised \$2,924.99 in support of the Baby Bottle Campaign to Save Lives and Support Families!~ *Jacqueline Stippich & Liza Oprandi*

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES PARKING

Please remember that you can use Redland Middle School for "overflow parking." If you are coming to one of the earlier Masses please try to coordinate so that your family has only one car in the parking lot. We will have Crossing Guards at the earlier Masses, but will ask everyone's cooperation and patience going in and out of our parking lot. ***Remember to be considerate of the Crossing Guards who are working on Christmas Eve to ensure your safety. Thank you!***

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.

NEW WEB SITE PAGE CREATED FOR PASTORAL COUNCIL MINUTES

The St. Francis Communications Ministry has created a page on our web site compiling the minutes of meetings of the Pastoral Council, the advisory body to Fr. John Dillon. The Pastoral Council advises the pastor on a variety of issues, including ministry work, facilities maintenance and operations and issues of parish-wide interest. The page can be found at www.sfadw.org under <http://www.sfadw.org/pastoral-council-meeting-minutes>.

At its October 2017 meeting, Fr. John presented the council with his 2017-18 Parish Goals. These are:

- Supporting Small Groups, which bring together five to 10 parishioners in homes to discuss their faith journey, deepen their Catholic faith and support one another in their relationship with Christ.
- Establishing and supporting the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Team, a group of parishioners strategizing on how to engage people moving into the Derwood area and past parishioners who have left.
- Launching the archdiocesan Indicators of Vitality process, which is a self-assessment tool that helps pastors and parishioners plan and identify needs for active participation in the mission of New Evangelization.
- Launching a parish facilities plan.

Pastoral Council member Alicia Church, who is a member of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, also briefed her colleagues on several initiatives that the advisory body to Donald Cardinal Wuerl is addressing. The archdiocese is moving forward with plans to honor African-American men, women and children who were enslaved and anonymously buried in archdiocesan and parish cemeteries.

The minutes of the October meeting can be found on the new web page under 'Serve' and 'Pastoral and Financial Councils.' For more information about the Pastoral Council's work, contact ask-theppc@gmail.com.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS/EVENTS

RE CLASS SCHEDULE AND THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

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.

PARENTAL & SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

St. Elizabeth Bereavement Ministry will offer an eight week bereavement support group series for adults who have experienced the death of a parent, spouse or significant other. The winter series will meet at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, Montrose Road in Rockville on Wednesday mornings, 10–11:30AM, from January 17 - March 7, 2018. There is no fee but registration is required. Space is strictly limited so call early. To register call Deacon Kevin Byrne (301-279-5962) or Claudia McAuliffe (301-881-1457).

MONTHLY ROSARY CALL

Mary, Our Blessed Mother, asks us to pray very much, especially the Rosary. Please join the Washington Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women (ACCW) to pray the Rosary on the 4th day of each month at 8:00 p.m. (Eastern time). We welcome all to phone into our ACCW Rosary by calling 605-468-8016 and insert access code: 357090# to pray the Rosary as a community. Our next call is scheduled for January 4, 2018 at 8:00 p.m. We look forward to your joining us! Thank you

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS/EVENTS

ST. FRANCIS YOUTH MINISTRY

Upcoming Events

FRED

DECEMBER

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

Next Meeting is January 14th!

GET SOCIAL

Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @ SFAFRED.

YOUTH SUMMER SERVICE CAMPS INTEREST MEETING

Fr. Jack is hosting an interest meeting for both teens and parents who are interested in participating in a summer service camp on Tuesday January 2nd at 7:00 p.m. in the Rectory Youth Room. It is important to attend this meeting to address any questions about the camp itself, the expectations/preparation, fundraising opportunities, and ask other questions! The only service camp that St. Francis will be participating this summer is the Encounter the Gospel of Life Service Camp in College Park. We are also hoping to have some teens attend the Steubenville Conference in June! More information can be found on the St. Francis website (www.sfadw.org).

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School

Catch our Spirit

www.StJudeRockville.org

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

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.

3rd Annual SJRCS International Day!

We invite you to travel...All Over the World!

Friday, February 2nd at 10:00 a.m.

We would love Parishioners to share their cultural heritage with the students. We are asking volunteers to set up a booth that represents the country you come from. The booth will contain different artifacts from your country (flags, posters, photographs, art, etc.) We are also asking that you bring samples of food from your country for the students to try at International Day (small appetizers, small desserts, etc.). Students will get their “Passport” stamped at each country, learn about your culture, and sample the different foods. We are also looking for groups to perform during the festival. If you can set up a booth or know a group that would love to perform, please contact Mrs. Balog at Katharine.Balog@StJudeRockville.org.

SFA HEALTH MINISTRY

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

A Merry Christmas is a Healthy Christmas

Christmas is the time to enjoy being with family and friends, to celebrate life and to be grateful for all God's gifts, especially the gift of health. Ways to honor your gift health this Christmas Season:

- **Healthy Practices at Mass.** If you are sick, do not attend Mass. If you are getting over a cold or illness or are immunosuppressed consider refraining from shaking hands during the sign of peace and refrain from taking the "Blood of Christ" from the common chalice during this flu season. Others will appreciate it.
- **Wash your hands.** Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- **Stay warm.** Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry and dress warmly in several layers.
- **Manage stress.** Keep your commitments and spending in check. Balance work, family and play. Keep a positive outlook. *Take time to refresh your spirit with prayer and devotion and SLEEP.*
- **Travel safely.** Whether you are traveling across town or around the world, ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive or let someone else drink and drive. Use Uber or Lyft services.
- **Be smoke free.** Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or talk to your health care professional for help.
- **Get check-ups and vaccinations.** Annual health screenings can detect problems early when treatment and potential for cure are optimal. Vaccinations prevent disease and save lives.
- **Watch the kids.** Keep potentially dangerous toys and household items out of the reach of young children to prevent choking hazards.
- **Prevent injuries/fires.** Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Keep candles away from children, pets, trees and curtains. Change your smoke detector batteries.
- **Handle and prepare food safely.** Wash your hands and food preparation surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook food to the proper temperatures and refrigerate perishable foods after two hours.
- **Eat healthy and be active.** Enjoy Christmas the healthy way with balance and moderation. Limit fats, salts and sugary foods. Incorporate physical activity into your holiday traditions. Take a nature hike. Carol throughout the neighborhood. Dance to your favorite holiday music.

WANT TO EXPERIENCE A HAITI MISSION TRIP?

Order Parishioner's Book for the Next Best Thing

If you're still looking for some last-minute holiday gifts, then consider the founding story of one of St. Francis' most beloved ministries. In 1996, St. Francis parishioner and pharmacist Frank J. Nice founded the Haiti Medical Mission to help provide primary medical interventions to parishioners of St. Francis' twin parish, St. Paul's Parish in Leon. More than 20 years later, the Haiti Medical Mission now serves 4,500 patients a year in Leon and its surrounding areas during five one-week medical mission trips to Haiti.

Nice has documented the unforgettable people he has met in Haiti, along with the adventures experienced during 22 trips to the Caribbean county in his recently published memoirs, *Haiti Beyond Belief*. The book is available through Nice's website: www.nicebreastfeeding.com and through Amazon at: https://www.amazon.com/Haiti-Beyond-Belief-Frank-Nice/dp/0998502413/ref=cm_sw_em_r_awdb_w_das_H8M4ybMP231PX_tt

Haiti Beyond Belief sells for \$10.04 (to commemorate Hurricane Matthew, which struck Haiti on 10/4/16). If ordered from Nice's web site, he will sign each book and make arrangements to transport the book to buyers. If buyers prefer to buy from Amazon, Nice encourages buyers to contact him at fjncat@hotmail.com so he can sign it.

All proceeds from the sales of *Haiti Beyond Belief* will be donated to the Haiti Medical Mission. For more information about the Haiti Medical Mission, visit www.sfadw.org under 'Haiti-Our Sister Parish.'

MOTHER TERESA VOCATION SOCIETY ANNUAL DAY OF RECOLLECTION

On Saturday, January 20, 2018, from 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Fr. Mark Ivany, Director of Priest Vocations for the Archdiocese of Washington, will lead a day of recollection at Annunciation Church in Washington, DC (3810 Massachusetts Ave., NW). The day will include Mass, a talk, Adoration, and an opportunity for Confession. Lunch will be served, and donations are welcomed. It is not required to be an MTVS member to attend this event! For more information, please visit www.dcpriest.org or contact Maris Moriarty at moriarty@adw.org or 202-636-9020.

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.