

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 23 - December 29

Monday, 12/23	9:00 a.m. Benicio Huaman
Tuesday, 12/24	9:00 a.m. Homebound Parishioners (L) 4:00 p.m. For Our Priests Intentions 6:00 p.m. For Our Priests Intentions 8:00 p.m. For Our Priests Intentions 11:00 p.m. For Our Priests Intentions
Wednesday, 12/25	8:00 a.m. Marie & James Galvin 9:30 a.m. Don Smith 11:15 a.m. <i>Pro populo</i>
Thursday, 12/26	9:00 a.m. Ambrosia Ramos
Friday, 12/27	9:00 a.m. Rita Arias
Saturday, 12/28	9:00 a.m. Msgr. Maurice O'Connell 5:00 p.m. Peggy Layer
Sunday, 12/29	8:00 a.m. Lee Sabatini 9:30 a.m. Januz Sieradzinski 11:15 a.m. <i>Pro populo</i> 5:00 p.m. RE Catechists & Families (L)

+ In Memoriam Aeternam +

In your charity, please pray for the repose of the soul of Patricia Jean Lewis, mother of Reverend Patrick Lewis.

Please pray for the sick... Zada Stamper, Joan Lutz-Maltz, Mike Mikula, Shirley Niggle, Adele Rita Powers, Carmen Rochester, Bob Jones, William Komlo, Margaret Weiss, Joseph Michael Gardner, Tom Breece, Sandra Kimball, Dennis Parnell, Ed Dudenhoefter, 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 22, 2019

Sunday:	Is 7:10-14/ Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 [7c, 10b]/ Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24
Monday:	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14/ Lk 1:57-66
Tuesday:	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 [2]/Lk 1:67-79
Wednesday:	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
Dawn:	Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7 /Lk 2:15-20
Day:	Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 [3c]/ Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or
Thursday:	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 [6]/Mt 10:17-22
Friday:	1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 [12]/ Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Saturday:	1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8 [7]/ Mt 2:13-18
Next Sunday:	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1]/ Col 3:12-21/Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

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 Bobbie McLaughlin and all her helpers who organize the Spirit Tree and the enormous number of Christmas gifts that our parish sends to the people who rely upon Assumption Parish in Southwest Washington to make their Christmas a little brighter by providing toys and other gifts to their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. 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.

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

Fourth Sunday of Advent

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What is my mission? What is God calling me to do? How can I fulfill my mission?



**PARISH OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 24 & 25
FOR CHRISTMAS**

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

KNIGHTS DONATE NEEDED FUNDS TO GROUPS SERVING PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The Knights of Columbus Council 2323 had a successful Tootsie Roll fundraiser, in support of people with intellectual disabilities. The Knights raised \$3,078, which will be donated to Special Olympics Maryland and UpCounty Community Resources. We wish to thank all of the parishioners of St. Francis for their support in this cause!

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

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.

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.

***Merry Christmas!
Fr. John***

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

St. Francis of Assisi Parish will celebrate several Masses this Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day, with a variety of music. Here is a list of the liturgies and the planned music for each Mass. We look forward to seeing you to celebrate Jesus Christ’s birth!

Christmas Eve Masses:

- 4 pm: Children's Choir and Cantor
- 6 pm: Cantor, Organ and Oboe
- 8 pm: Cantor, Organ and Oboe
- 10 pm: Choral Prelude
- 11 pm: Choir, String Quartet and Organ

Christmas Day Masses:

- 8 am: Cantor and Organ
- 9:30 am: Trumpet, Cello, Organ and Cantor
- 11:15 am: Contemporary Choir

There will be no 5 pm Mass on Christmas Day

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMMITMENT CARDS BY JANUARY 5!

Thank you to the 144 parishioners who have completed and submitted their Commitment Card for our Offertory Stewardship Appeal program, “Responding to God’s Call to Love and to Serve.” As a reminder, all commitments need to be submitted to church no later than January 5, 2020, to be accounted for in the final Summary Report. Please complete and submit the card to the church even if you are unable to make a change to your current giving level; extra Commitment Cards can be found at the Information Desk in the Gathering Space. For those registered parishioners not currently supporting the church with regular offertory gifts, please consider a monthly gift to support the needs of our parish. If you have any questions, please contact the Parish Office at (301) 840-1407.

December 22, 2019

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING Lamb of God Prayer Group will NOT meet on Tuesday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 31. For details, please call Pat, (301) 963-9196.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next weekend 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.

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 looking for new, transferring or readmitted members to share in their Charity, Fraternity, Unity and Patriotism activities. Council 2323 supports many St. Francis activities and has many social events. The KofC offers life and long term care insurance opportunities as well as annuities. A new opportunity: join as an Online Member for \$30 per year; go to www.kofc.org and click on "Join Us". If you wish you can join the Council later. If interested in learning more, contact Gary Palmer (301-948-6494 or email gtdbpalmer@verizon.net).

ROSARY PRAYED IN SPANISH IN THE CHURCH

The Spanish Ministry prays the Rosary in Spanish at 6:30 pm on Tuesdays in the church. Please join us. For more information about the Spanish Ministry, please contact Will Garcia at wagarcia@comcast.net or Lourdes Garcia at legarcia@comcast.net.

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 Guard who is working on Christmas Eve to ensure your safety. Thank you!***

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN HELPING PAX CHRISTI SERVE REFUGEE FAMILIES

The St. Francis Pax Christi Ministry thanks the benefactors and volunteers who supported our locally sponsored refugees and families seeking asylum this past year. Currently, we are working with four families. Highlights of our support in 2019 include paying for dental costs for adult family members, supplementing rent payments, paying utility costs, working with another nonprofit to purchase back-to-school supplies for 300 refugee and needy children in Hyattsville and covering the cost of missed wages when one of the refugee family breadwinners had a necessary surgery. We also contributed to the purchase of a car for work for one family.

Our volunteers are busier than ever, and the needs are great. We are currently providing transportation, tutoring in English and schoolwork, identifying housing, assisting with medical needs, helping with budgeting, offering legal documentation support, and other emergency help. It has truly been a great blessing to work with these 'new neighbors.'

For more information about our efforts, please contact Mary Kate Ryner at rynoslp@msn.com or Chris King at caking_home@gmail.com. Donations can be made to St. Francis of Assisi with designation to Refugee Fund.

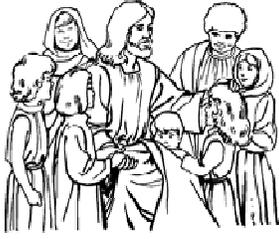
SAVE THE DATE ON JANUARY 18 FOR THE HAITI BENEFIT CONCERT

It's nearly time for the Haiti Benefit Concert – get ready for lots of toe tapping! The annual concert will feature the Olney Big Band, a traditional jazz big band specializing in classic swing, jazz and dance music from the Big Band Era of the 30s and 40s and arrangements from the 50s to present day. The full band will perform at 7:30 pm in the church and the event is open to the public. While there will be no admission charged, all donations will benefit the Haiti Medical Mission in St. Francis of Assisi's sister parish in Léon, Haiti. Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors to the concert, as it's a wonderful way to introduce others to our parish community. A reception of light hors d'oeuvres and desserts will follow the event in the Gathering Space. For more information, please contact Director of the Music Ministry Janet Pate at sfadwmusic@gmail.com.

ON JANUARY 5, MASS FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN CELEBRATES PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Mass for All of God's Children, which especially recognizes children and adults with special needs and developmental differences in our communities, will be held at the 5:00 p.m. Youth Mass, on Sunday, January 5, 2019 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 decaffqueen@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 22, 23 & 24.
Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, December 29, 30 & 31.

Religious Education classes will resume on January 5, 6 and 7.

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREP DAY SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

Children preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time will attend a day of preparation on Saturday, January 4 from 9:00 am - 12:30 pm in the Parish Center (Snow date: January 11). Please pray for these children who will receive this Sacrament on Saturday, January 18.

CATECHISTS AND AIDES NEEDED

Additional volunteers are needed for our Monday afternoon Elementary program and for our Sunday Special Needs Catechesis class. Please consider whether you can serve as a catechist or classroom aide for our children and young people. To learn more about this important ministry, please contact Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

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 website and Facebook page ("St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church"). 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.

UPCOMING YOUTH MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

Dear Parents/Teens,

Thank you for a fruitful fall semester! We have eight to sixteen teens attending every Youth Group meeting. Please join us again next year as we discuss God's plan for marriage and the family. Our next meeting will be on Sunday, January 5, 2020. If you would like to make a meal for one of our youth group meeting, please e-mail me at sfayouth@sfadw.org.

*Merry Christmas!
God bless you,
Sarah Seyed-Ali*

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School *We are...St. Jude* www.StJudeRockville.org

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 23rd through January 5th.

SJRCS RE-ENROLLMENT

The re-enrollment period is upon us! Register for the 2020-2021 school year. School families can enroll now through December 31. On January 1st the admissions window will open for everyone. Enrollment: [TADS: Online Registration and Enrollment](#)
Tuition Incentive Program: [Receive \\$750 off your tuition bill for every family you refer \(and enrolls\) at SJRCS!](#)

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

Join us January 31, 2020 as we celebrate the rich culture and worldwide traditions that make St. Jude such a special place. We need you to help make this event a success! We are asking volunteers to set up booths that represent the country you come from with food and items from that country. Contact Ms. Balog at Katharine.Balog@StJudeRockville.org to help.

PLEASE JOIN US MARCH 21, 2020 AT 6:00 PM

All proceeds support our goal for an
ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY LAB
*Silent Auction * Raffles * Live Auction*
*Buffet Dinner * Online and Mobile Bidding * Dancing*
Featuring Live Band: [DOCTORS ORDERS](#)
Casual Dress

(Come wearing your favorite denim and diamonds!)

Buy Your Jeep Renegade Raffle Ticket online TODAY!
\$50 per ticket and only 500 tickets will be sold

[https://sosj.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/DenimandDiamonds/
tabid/1098759/Default.aspx](https://sosj.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/DenimandDiamonds/tabid/1098759/Default.aspx)

MARRIAGE IS YOUR VOCATION - START LIVING IT

You can have a deep spiritual life in communion with your spouse and Christ - come discover Teams of Our Lady, a Roman Catholic married lay movement that helps you structure and grow your conjugal spiritual life. We will hold an information session on Saturday, January 4, at 1:00 pm at St. John Neumann Church, in the Neumann House (across the street from the church). For more information or to RSVP please contact Mary Singleton, mpksingleton@yahoo.com.

PRAYERS FOR OUR SERVICE MEN/WOMEN

Please continue to pray for all those parishioners, family members and friends who are serving in the military services in Iraq, Afghanistan and other dangerous areas. We have a prayer list posted in the Gathering Space for those who are serving in these areas. Please help us to keep it current by letting us know of any parishioner who is currently deployed so we can add them, and also those who have returned so that we can remove their names. Please continue to keep all of our military personnel in your prayers.

MEN'S RETREAT - FEBRUARY 7-9, 2020

"Life in Christ: The Gift of the Sacraments" The Office for Family Life is hosting a Men's Retreat. Join men from around the Archdiocese of Washington for a weekend retreat directed by Fr. Dave Wells and Msgr. Robert Panke. Are you living the graces of a fully sacramental life? What does it mean to live out our baptism, to live a Eucharistic life and to access the grace of the sacrament of reconciliation in our daily lives and relationships? This retreat will help you to reflect on the importance of our sacraments and to reconnect with the most important relationship in your life - your relationship with Christ. The retreat will be held at Priestfield Pastoral Center in Kearneysville, WV. To register go to <https://2020adwmensretreat.eventbrite.com> or for more information call the Office for Family Life at 301-853-4499.

HELP FOR MARRIAGES IN TROUBLE

Is your marriage going down the right road or is it a little off track? Looking for a better way? The Retrouvaille Program is for married couples facing difficult challenges in their relationship. It is a Christian marriage program, Catholic in origin, in which couples of all faiths or no faith background are encouraged to attend. It can help you learn the tools of healthy communication, build intimacy, and heal. For confidential information about or to register for the weekend on 24-26 January 2020, please visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org, call 443-400-7017, or e-mail: 3015@retrouvaille.org. There is hope!

OBERAMMERGAU PILGRIMAGE

JULY 12-23, 2020

Parishioners are invited to St. Patrick's Parish Pilgrimage. It will be to Oberammergau for the world-famous Passion Play, and then will continue through Austria into Italy, ending with attendance at a Papal audience in Rome. If you would like additional information or details, please contact Melanie Baker, Director of Adult Faith Formation, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Rockville MD, stpatrickadultfaithformation@gmail.com or call Melanie at 301-924-2285 Ext. 317.

AMAZONSMILE ENABLES ST. FRANCIS TO INCREASE FUNDRAISING THROUGH ONLINE SHOPPING

St. Francis parishioners can support our church whenever they're shopping online at Amazon.com. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church recently became a recipient of AmazonSmile, which enables the church to receive 0.5 percent of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases you make. Go to our Home Page to start shopping!

MASS FOR THE HOMEBOUND

Do you know someone who can't get to Mass? Please tell them about the Sunday TV Mass, which is produced by the Archdiocese of Washington and taped in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. It is a wonderful ministry for those members of our Catholic family who are unable to be physically present with a local worshipping community for the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy.

The Mass airs every Sunday at 10:30 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

FORMED

THE CATHOLIC FAITH ON DEMAND

The best Catholic content. All in one place. It's EASY and FREE to Register!

- 1) Go to sfadw.formed.org
- 2) Click "Register" and enter your name, email address, and desired password
- 3) You're all ready to access the inspiring and Engaging content on FORMED!
- 4) Enjoy and share with others in our local community!

FORMED is available 24/7 for you to grow in your faith. St. Francis has purchased this gift for parish use.

YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE ABUSED

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of violent and coercive behavior by one adult over another in an intimate relationship. It can consist of repeated severe beatings or subtle forms of abuse, including threats and control. If you experience any form of abuse, please know that there is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. To learn more about domestic violence, please visit www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace.

2019 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

To receive credit in 2019, your contributions must be dated December 31, 2019. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be received in the parish Office on or before Thursday, January 2, 2020. As a reminder, the parish statement of contributions will not include your FAITHDIRECT contributions. You will receive a statement directly from FAITHDIRECT.