

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 13 - December 19

Monday, 12/13	9:00 a.m.	William Chase
Tuesday, 12/14	9:00 a.m.	Don Smith
Wednesday, 12/15	9:00 a.m.	Joseph Michael Gardner
	7:30 p.m.	Msgr. Robert Cary Hill
Thursday, 12/16	9:00 a.m.	Angel Andrada
Friday, 12/17	9:00 a.m.	Deacon Ralph W. Cyrus, Jr.
Saturday, 12/18	5:00 p.m.	Patsy & Stella Battista
Sunday, 12/19	8:00 a.m.	<i>Pro populo</i>
	9:30 a.m.	Thomas & Julie Flanery
	11:15 a.m.	Guy Beaven
	5:00 p.m.	Anne Stehle Hope

Mass Intentions will be prayed for in a private daily Mass said by Fr. John if not prayed for in a public Mass.

+ In Memoriam Aeternam +

In your charity, please pray for the repose of the soul of James Francis Cunningham, brother-in-law of Maria Dunn.

Please pray for the sick... Bernie McLoughlin, Harold Singleton, Fr. Francis Russo, Fr. Joseph Mindling, Jeanette Davidson, Donna Ruffin, Allan Jay Francisco, Baby Nathan, Father Francis Russo, Debra Price, Barbara Schmidt, Mary Cutting, Angelica Santos, Jackie Komlo, Allison Brauer, Frank Knorr, Allan Degen, Bob Jones, William Komlo, Sandra Kimball, Ed Dudenhoeffer, 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 12, 2021

Sunday:	Zep 3:14-18a/Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 [6]/Phil 4:4-7/ Lk 3:10-18
Monday:	Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9 [4]/Mt 21:23-27
Tuesday:	Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19 and 23 [7a]/Mt 21:28-32
Wednesday:	Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11- 12, 13-14 [Is 45:8]/Lk 7:18b-23
Thursday:	Is 54:1-10/Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a, and 13b [2a]/Lk 7:24-30
Friday:	Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17 [cf. 7]/Mt 1:1-17
Saturday:	Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 [cf. 7]/ Mt 1:18-25
Next Sunday:	Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/ Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

We have experienced many cancelled events and disappointments during this time of pandemic. For the second year in a row Saint Nicholas has had to cancel his customary visit to our parish. He would have been expected to come last Sunday, December 5, the Second Sunday of Advent because it is the day before his actual feast day. Perhaps because Saint Nicholas (known by some by the nickname Santa Claus) had to cancel his travel plans last year and this year as a precaution owing to restrictions in international travel, some of the children of the parish might be asking the question that Virginia O'Hanlon asked the editor of a New York newspaper many years ago. In anticipation of Christmas, which we will celebrate in less than two weeks from now, I want to print what is probably the most reprinted editorial in any newspaper in the English language. In 1897, the *New York Sun* received a letter to the Editor from Virginia O'Hanlon, who was eight years old and a resident of New York City. Her letter was only a four sentences long:

Dear Editor:

I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says: "If you see it in THE SUN it's so. Please tell me the truth: is there a Santa Claus?" Virginia O'Hanlon. 115 West Ninety-Fifth Street.

Francis Pharcellus Church was the editor of the *New York Sun* who was assigned to answer little Virginia's letter. Church had served as a war correspondent during the American Civil War, a time that saw a great deal of suffering and lack of hope and faith in much of society. He saw in Virginia's letter (for which she may have had some help in composition from her father, Dr. Philip O'Hanlon) an opportunity to address this. Let's enjoy reading this wonderful piece as we wait for Christmas day.

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exists, and you know that they abound and give joy to your lives its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would the world be if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and delight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

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

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How can I spread the joy in my family, my neighborhood, my world?

**PARISHIONERS' DONATIONS TO TOGO MISSION
CONTRIBUTE TO THE BUILDING
OF FOUR MORE WELLS**

In a recent thank you note from Fr. Bill Ryan, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Togo, West Africa, the missionary priest from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington expressed his gratitude to the parishes that donated generously during his most recent visit to the United States. This included St. Francis of Assisi Church.

"I think, often enough, collections are taken up and soon forgotten about, but I wanted you to know that your parishioners' generosity has had a real, practical effect here," Fr. Ryan wrote. "We were able to pay a good, reliable well-drilling company to come up from Lomé, the capital, and successfully drill four more wells for villagers who really need clean water." Fr. Ryan expressed his thanks for all the donations given during the second collection the weekend he preached at our church. For more information about the Togo mission, go to <https://togomissionparish.org/>.

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR continued

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to watch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's not proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all read? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank GOD! He lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Today is Gaudete Sunday, a Sunday in Advent when we rejoice because soon we will be celebrating the birth of the Christ Child. Just think: in thirteen days it will be Christmas Day!

Until next week,
Fr. John Dillon
Pastor

**REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND ONE OF THE
CHRISTMAS MASSES**

Registration for the six Christmas Masses will be open at noon Friday, December 10, with liturgies to be celebrated at 4 pm, 6 pm, 8 pm and 11 pm on Christmas Eve and at 9:30 am and 11:15 am on Christmas Day. Fr. John is requesting Mass goers sign up to ensure the parish is managing attendance to avoid overcrowding; please sign up for a Christmas Mass at <https://sfaderwood.flocknote.com/signup/76291>. People who are not subscribed to Flocknote may also call the Parish Office at (301) 840-1407 to sign up for a Christmas Mass through 4 pm Thursday, December 23.

The capacity at each of the Masses will be approximately 250 people per liturgy; we will continue enforcing the three-foot distance between unrelated households and reserving a section of the church for people who would like to maintain a six-foot distance between households.

The parish also plans to offer either a live streamed Mass or a recorded Mass, so more information will be forthcoming on the virtual Christmas Mass option. For more information, please call the Parish Office at (301) 840-1407.

**PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD
THIS ADVENT SEASON**

Gift cards for the Spirit Tree are due back this weekend in sealed envelopes; they can be dropped off in the collection basket during Mass or brought to the Parish Office during business hours. As we celebrate Gaudete Sunday during Advent, we will also celebrate the following events this week:

- On December 11 and 12, buy right-to-life Christmas cards, Alternative Christmas Gifts, and Just Haiti Coffee after all Masses in the Gathering Space.
- On Monday, December 13, join us for the Advent Penance Service at 7 pm in church. Come receive forgiveness of your sins at this communal prayer service, during which several priests will be hearing Confession.
- On Thursday, December 16, come hear Dr. John Grabowski, the Ordinary Professor of Moral Theology/Ethics at The Catholic University of America, speak at 7:30 pm in the Parish Center on the topic of "Challenging Issues for Faithful Catholics."

To read more about Advent events, liturgical services, and fundraisers at our parish, please see <https://www.sfadw.org/advent-christmas>.

A REMINDER FROM FR. JOHN ... If anyone is living in a marriage that has not been recognized by the Catholic Church, it would be wise to consult with a priest to see whether that situation might be rectified. It could be as simple as repeating your marriage vows quietly in front of a priest and receiving the Church's blessing. In that way, one would become eligible to receive the Sacraments of the Church, especially the Eucharist



**GROUP A ELEMENTARY CLASSES
MEET DECEMBER 12 & 13**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSES
MEET DECEMBER 13 & 14**

CHRISTMAS STOCKING HELP LINE

Religious Education families are invited to support families served by Catholic Charities here in Montgomery County by donating \$25-\$50 gift cards for local departments stores (e.g., Target) through our "RE Christmas Stocking Help Line." Families may choose to take one (or more) stockings, purchase a gift card, and return these to RE classes by December 14. Look for a letter with more information about this project 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:

Grades 3-5 (Gr. B) – Sun., Dec. 5
Grades 3-5 (Gr. A) – Sun., Dec. 12
Grades 3-5 (Gr. B) – Sun., Dec. 19

Monday 4:45 Session:

Grades 3, 4 and 5 – Mon., Dec. 13

Monday 6:45 Session:

Grades 6, 7 & 8 – Mon., Dec. 13
(participating in the Parish Penance Service starting at 7:00 pm)

Tuesday 6:45 Session:

Grades 6, 7 & 8 – Tues., Dec. 14

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

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School

We are...St. Jude

www.StJudeRockville.org

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

Instagram: [stjuderockville](https://www.instagram.com/stjuderockville)

Twitter: [@StJudeRCS](https://twitter.com/StJudeRCS)

REGISTRATION FOR SJRCS IS OPEN!

Registration for current families for the 2022 school year is now open! Registration for new families begins December 16th. Register early as we have limited openings!

MATTHEW 25 REMINDS US "I NEEDED CLOTHES AND YOU CLOTHED ME".

St. Jude Regional Catholic School is joining Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of the Washington for their annual Coats of Many Colors Coat Drive! We are collecting coats, hats, gloves, and scarves for members of our local community. We will collect new and gently used coats that are clean and in good condition until December 16th. We politely ask that you wash all coats before donating. Coats may be dropped off in the breezeway or at the school office.

Please Note: SJRCS will be closed for the Christmas holiday from noon on December 22nd through January 3rd. Classes will resume Tuesday, January 4th.

MOTHER OF GOD TEACHING POSITIONS OPEN

Mother of God School is recruiting for three positions: a Pre-Kindergarten instructional aide, a First Grade instructional aide, and a Long term substitute First Grade Teacher. All positions are full-time. MOG School is an Independent Catholic PreK through 8th-grade school, affiliated with the Archdiocese of Washington. At Mother of God, faith is not an extra but an integral part of everything we do! Please contact the principal, Melissa Sloan, at principal@mogschool.com for more information

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (continued)

SNOW/EMERGENCY CANCELLATION POLICY

If Montgomery County Public Schools are closed, and if schools are dismissed early, Religious Education classes 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 posted:

- On the parish website: www.sfadw.org
- On the St. Francis Parish Facebook page: "St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church"
- On the Religious Education Office phone voicemail: 301-258-9193.

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.

MOVING/CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR EMAIL

Please notify the parish office, 301-840-1407, of any changes in your address, phone number or email. Thank you!

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).

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. 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.

APPLY BEFORE DECEMBER 17 FOR THE COUNTY POLICING ADVISORY COMMISSION

Parishioners interested in influencing how the Montgomery County Police Department interacts with communities of color are encouraged to apply for a vacancy on the county Policing Advisory Commission, a volunteer body that advises the Montgomery County Council on policing matters.

The Commission's public members should reflect a range of ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and places of origin to reflect the racial and economic diversity of the county's communities. Applicants should have an interest or expertise in policing matters and must participate in the Montgomery County Police Department Citizens Academy.

The deadline to apply is 5 pm Friday, December 17. Members serve three-year terms without pay but are eligible for travel reimbursement and dependent care for in-person meetings attended. Meetings are currently held virtually on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 6:30 pm. Read more at https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgpportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=39584&Dept=1

JOIN THE COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN ON DECEMBER 19 FOR VIRTUAL ADVENT OF JOY TEA

On Sunday, December 19, join the Council of Catholic Women-Archdiocese of Washington at its Advent of Joy Virtual Tea from 3-4 pm on Zoom. As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, council members will reflect on The Holy Trinity and Mary. Register for this free online event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/join-ccw-adw-for-advent-of-joy-tickets-220662646917>. For more information, e-mail ArchdioceseCCW@gmail.com.

KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS POSTER CONTEST

Knights of Columbus Montgomery Council #2323 is inviting all Kindergarten through Grade 8 St. Francis students to participate in the organization's international *Keep Christ in Christmas* poster contest. We hope that all students will participate by designing an original handmade 11x17 inch poster that reflects the contest theme: "*Keep Christ in Christmas.*"

Please stop by the Knights Poster Contest in the Gathering Space to get a copy of the Poster Contest Entry Form. Full details can be found on the "Poster Judging Fact Sheet" found on page 2 of the entry form. Council #2323 will be giving a \$30 prize to the winner in each of the following age groups:

- Kindergarten-Grade 2
- Grades 3-5
- Grades 6-8

Submissions will be judged by a panel of St. Francis Staff Members using the criteria outlined on the entry form. Winning entries will advance through district/regional and jurisdictional competitions to the international level as follows:

- Digital copies of the winning poster in each age group will be submitted to the State Level. State winners will be announced by January 25.
- Winners at the State Level will then proceed to the Supreme Level and, if your poster is chosen, the original poster will need to be submitted to the Supreme Council.
- Prizes are offered at each of these levels as well.

The winning entries will serve as the basis for a series of international *Keep Christ in Christmas* posters, with creative credit going to the artists. Please note that all entries become property of the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council. Posters will not be returned.

To participate in this contest, submit a digital copy of your handmade 11"x17" poster and completed entry form by Friday, **December 17**, to the Parish Office, dzezzo@sfadw.org.

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, Give, Give Now and start shopping!

2021 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

To receive credit in 2021, your contributions must be dated December 31, 2021. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be received in the parish Office on or before Monday, January 3, 2022. As a reminder, the parish statement of contributions will not include your FAITHDIRECT contributions. You will receive a statement directly from FAITHDIRECT.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP PROVIDE SERVICES TO AFGHAN REFUGEES

Catholic Charities of Washington DC is helping to solicit volunteers for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to provide services for newly arrived Afghan refugees. Volunteers would be helping with a children's Recreational Day Program and Conversational English classes. Approximately 120 adults and 80 children, under the age of 10, will be served at one location in Bethesda. The USCCB is looking for volunteers who can consistently provide at least one full day of service each week until approximately March 2022. The programs will operate seven days per week. Volunteers will receive remuneration for parking and meals, and there is a potential opportunity for paid positions. Completion of the Protecting God's Children course is preferred. All adult Afghan guests are fully vaccinated, and all volunteers must be fully vaccinated. All persons inside the facility will wear masks throughout their time of service. For more information, e-mail volunteers@usccb.org.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

The St. Elizabeth Bereavement Ministry will offer a support group series for adults who have experienced the death of a parent, spouse, or significant other. The sessions will run on seven consecutive Thursday evenings, January 6 - February 17, 2022, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. The sessions will be run virtually using the Zoom platform. Registration is required. To register contact Deacon Kevin Bryne (301-279-5962) or Claudia McAuliffe (301-881-1457). St. Elizabeth Church, 917 Montrose Road, Rockville.

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. For additional information or to learn more about domestic violence, please visit www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace.

ARE YOU COMFORTABLE USING TURBO TAX?

If yes, Catholic Charities needs you! Next February, the Catholic Charities' Tax Clinic will open its doors for the 6th tax season at Catholic University. The goal of the Tax Clinic is to help low-income families maximize their tax refund. The Tax Clinic makes sure these families claim every tax benefit they are entitled to (e.g., child tax credits, child care credits, economic stimulus payments, and earned income credits). Volunteer tax preparers are supported by Catholic Charities staff, experienced volunteers, and lawyers from the Catholic University Columbus School of Law who provide training in January. If you are interested in helping these families prepare their tax returns, please reach out to Deacon Jim Shanahan at Catholic Charities (email: jim.shanahan@cc-dc.org or phone: 202-262-1419).

2022 YOUTH RALLY & MASS FOR LIFE UPDATE

Throughout the past several months, we have been planning an in-person Youth Rally and Mass for Life at Capital One Arena on January 21, 2022. Tickets for this event opened on October 15. At this point in time, fewer than 6,000 tickets have been requested/sold. ADW parishes and schools have reserved approximately 1,250 tickets. By comparison, in past years, all 19,000 tickets were gone within a few hours of opening registration. In order to promote stewardship of diocesan funds and honor safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Life Issues and the Catholic Youth Organization will be moving the 2022 Youth Rally and Mass for Life. We will host a **live event in the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, open only to youth participants and chaperones from the Archdiocese of Washington**. We hope that this ADW Rally and Mass for Life will be as lively and educational as our past events, while also providing a more personal and engaging experience for our young people. The Youth Rally and Mass for Life will be live streamed for viewers who are outside of the Archdiocese of Washington. Please watch the bulletin for additional information.

ONLINE GIVING THROUGH FAITH DIRECT

Throughout the Christmas season, people in need right here in our community turn to St. Francis of Assisi for warm meals, comfort, and shelter during the holidays. We must be there for them and share Christ's love. To do that, we need your help. Your generous online donations are needed now to help sustain Christmas ministries that reflect the promise of God's love. COVID-19 and news of its variants continue to cause upheaval and uncertainty, giving our ministries added importance. Your kindness will help families all around us.

We prayerfully request that you consider signing up for eGiving from your computer, Smartphone or tablet. You can set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. Sign up today by visiting faith.direct/MD110. Thank you for your continued support of our parish family.

God Bless You,
Fr. John

SUPPORT THE AGING RELIGIOUS

This weekend, the second collection is for the Retirement fund for Religious. Many senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests served for little or no pay. Today, religious communities often do not have enough savings to meet retirement needs. Your gift helps provide medications, nursing care, and more for tens of thousands of elderly religious. It also helps ensure younger members can continue the good works of their elders. ***Please be generous.***

DONATE YOUR USED CLOTHING If you are sorting through gently used clothing to give away, remember that there is a St. Vincent de Paul clothing collection bin in the lower parking lot. Donations of clean clothing in good repair is greatly appreciated. Please put clothing in a plastic bag and deposit in the slot at the top of the bin. Collections are made weekly and will be a great blessing to those in need in the region.