



All flesh shall see the salvation of God.

*Second Sunday of Advent
December 5, 2021*

*Saint Francis of Assisi Parish
Missions of Our Lady of the Valley in Fall River Mills
and Saint Stephen's in Bieber*

Mission Statement

We, the Catholic Church of Saint Francis, are a community of faith called by Baptism to center our lives in the sacraments and the Holy Eucharist. We gather together to mutually grow in our love for God and neighbor by studying the Word of God; by believing in the Faith and Traditions from the Apostles; by accepting the teachings of the Magisterium and by receiving and giving support, hope, faith and charity.

*Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís
Misiones de Nuestra Señora del Valle en Fall River Mills
y San Esteban en Bieber*

Nuestra Misión

Nosotros la Iglesia de San Francisco, somos una comunidad de Fe llamados por el Bautismo a centrar nuestra vida en los sacramentos y la Santa Eucaristía. Nosotros nos reunimos para crecer mutuamente en nuestro amor a Dios y a nuestro semejante a través de estudiar la Palabra de Dios; a través de creer en la Fe y Tradición de los Apóstoles; a través de aceptar las enseñanzas del Magisterio y a través de recibir y dar Apoyo, Fe, Esperanza y Caridad.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

PO Box 160, 37464 Juniper Avenue
Burney, CA 96013
Tel. (530) 335-2372

Website: www.stfrancisburney.org
e-mail: pastor@stfrancisburney.org
www.facebook.com/stfrancisburney
www.facebook.com/francisco.deasis.16100921
Bulletin Editor: David Wanat (530) 250-7466
convoyb@gmail.com

MISSIONS

Our Lady of the Valley 43434 Hwy. 299E Fall River Mills	St. Stephen's 201 Hwy. 299E Bieber
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MASS SCHEDULE

See "Parish Calendar" (opposite) for changes.

Weekends

Saturday	4:30 pm	Our Lady of the Valley
Sunday	9:00 am	St. Francis
	11:00 am	Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)
	1:00 pm	St. Stephen's

Weekdays

Mon, Tue, Fri	9:00 am	St. Francis
Thursday	6:30 pm	St. Francis (Spanish)
Friday	6:00 pm	Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)

ADORATION

1st Friday	9:30 am—Noon	St. Francis
1st Saturday	3:30 pm	Our Lady of the Valley
1st Sunday	11:45 am	St. Stephen's
Thursdays	3—6:30 pm	St. Francis
Fridays	11 am—6 pm	Our Lady of the Valley

First Sunday of the Month: All the Masses are said for the sick and following Mass, Anointing of the Sick will be administered.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Confession is available one-half hour before scheduled Masses. Otherwise, call the parish for an appointment.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL FOOD BANK

Food is available on request. Call the parish at 335-2372 for food anytime you are in need or call Bob Gartner at 249-8641.

NEW PARISHIONERS

Please register at our website www.stfrancisburney.org

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN (CCD)

Please contact
Elaine Shields (336-1003) or
Estella Valdovinos (524-6434) Spanish

MUSIC: WEDDINGS & FUNERALS

Please contact Joan Knapp (530) 294-1234

BECOMING CATHOLIC (RCIA)

Program of study for non-Catholic adults or Catholics seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation. Contact Bob Gartner at (530) 249-8641 or email: bobgartner@gmail.com

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact Bob Gartner (bobgartner@gmail.com)

MINISTERS

St. Francis

Lectors:

December 5

John Klobas
Justin Olesen

December 12

Karen Churney
Abbie Olesen

CALENDAR

	11/18-12/7	Fr. Pol on Retreat and Rest— Weekday Masses Cancelled
Wed	12/8	Mass of the Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation) •St. Francis 9 am, •St. Stephen 1 pm, •OLV 5 pm English, •OLV 6:30 pm Spanish
Sat/Sun	12/11-12	Retirement Fund for Religious 2nd Collection
Wed	12/15	Advent Penitential Service. 6:30pm at Our Lady of the Valley.

**For more information see our website at
www.stfrancisburney.org**

Offertory Collections

Fiscal Year-to-Date

	Actual	Budget	Difference	%
St. Francis	17,535	19,242	-1,707	-8.9%
OLV-English	10,603	8,640	1,963	22.7%
OLV-Spanish	8,536	7,959	577	7.2%
St. Stephen's	9,020	11,025	-2,005	-18.2%
WeShare	4,998	3,983	1,015	25.5%
Total Collections	50,692	50,849	-157	-0.3%

Reflection

Advent is a season of preparation for the coming of the Lord. By the power of his grace at work in us, let us "make straight his paths": sincerely repent of our sins, ask his forgiveness, and open our hearts to joyfully welcome him into our lives.

Hospitality at St. Stephen's

Every Sunday is hospitality Sunday at St. Stephen's. Please join us for a nice lunch with soup/casserole, salad, bread, dessert and drinks. All are welcome, bring something to share if you can.

Announcements

- Wednesday, December 8th is a **Holy Day of Obligation, the Immaculate Conception of Mary**. Please see the schedule of Masses on page 2.
- **Weekday Masses on Monday and Tuesday are cancelled this week. Fr. Pol will return from vacation on Wednesday.**
- **We will have the Mass for the Sick (Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick) next weekend.**
- Our **Offertory Collections are 0.3% under budget** for the Year-to-Date.
- We **pray the Rosary Sunday mornings before Mass** at St. Francis beginning at 8:30. Please join us!
- **Advent Penitential Service.** December 15, Wednesday 6:30PM at Our Lady of the Valley.
- Retirement Fund for the Religious—Religious Institutes—Second Collection Next Week—The appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious asks us to recall those women and men religious whose ministry has nourished our own faith, served our Church, and strengthened our nation. Today, more than 37,000 women and men religious are past age 70. Their institutes face critical economic challenges as the costs of health care escalate and as the need for handicapped-accessible housing increases.

Advent Reflection by Eusebius of Caesarea

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. The prophecy makes clear that it is to be fulfilled, not in Jerusalem but in the wilderness: it is there that the glory of the Lord is to appear, and God's salvation is to be made known to all mankind.

It was in the wilderness that God's saving presence was proclaimed by John the Baptist, and there that God's salvation was seen. The words of this prophecy were fulfilled when Christ and his glory were made manifest to all: after his baptism the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove rested on him, and the Father's voice was heard, bearing witness to the Son: *This is my beloved Son, listen to him.*

The prophecy meant that God was to come to a deserted place, inaccessible from the beginning. None of the pagans had any knowledge of God, since his holy servants and prophets were kept from approaching them. The voice commands that a way be prepared for the Word of God: the rough and trackless ground is to be made level, so that our God may find a highway when he comes. Prepare the way of the Lord: the way is the preaching of the Gospel, the new message of consolation, ready to bring to all mankind the knowledge of God's saving power.

Climb on a high mountain, bearer of good news to Zion. Lift up your voice in strength, bearer of good news to Jerusalem. These words harmonize very well with the meaning of what has gone before. They refer opportunely

to the evangelists and proclaim the coming of God to men, after speaking of the voice crying in the wilderness. Mention of the evangelists suitably follows the prophecy on John the Baptist.

What does Zion mean if not the city previously called Jerusalem? This is the mountain referred to in that passage from Scripture: Here is mount Zion, where you dwelt. The Apostle says: You have come to mount Zion. Does not this refer to the company of the apostles, chosen from the former people of the circumcision?

This is the Zion, the Jerusalem, that received God's salvation. It stands aloft on the mountain of God, that is, it is raised high on the only-begotten Word of God. It is commanded to climb the high mountain and announce the word of salvation. Who is the bearer of the good news but the company of the evangelists? What does it mean to bear the good news but to preach to all nations, but first of all to the cities of Judah, the coming of Christ on earth?

From the General Audience of Pope Francis (12/1/2021)

Let us continue our journey of reflection on the person of Saint Joseph. Today, I would like to deepen his being "just" and "Mary's betrothed spouse", and thus provide a message to all engaged couples, and newlyweds as well.

What does the Gospel say about Joseph? The evangelist Matthew defines Joseph as a "just" man. Let us listen to his account: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly" (1:18-19). Because those who were engaged, when the fiancée was unfaithful, or became pregnant, they could accuse her! They had to. And the women were stoned back then. But Joseph was just. He says: "No, I am not going to do this. I will go away quietly".

To understand Joseph's behavior toward Mary, it is helpful to remember the marriage customs of ancient Israel. Marriage included two well-defined phases. The first was like an official engagement that already implied a new situation. In particular, while continuing to live in her paternal home for another year, the woman was in fact considered the "wife" of her betrothed spouse. They still did not live together, but it was like she was already someone's wife. The second phase was the transfer of the bride from her paternal home to that of her spouse. This took place with a festive procession which concluded the marriage. And the friends of the bride accompanied her there. On the basis of these customs, the fact that "before they came to live together, Mary was found to be with child" exposed the Virgin to the accusation of adultery. And, according to the ancient Law, her guilt

was punishable with stoning (cf. Dt 22:20-21). Nevertheless, a more moderate interpretation had taken hold after this in later Jewish practice that imposed only an act of repudiation along with civil and criminal consequences for the woman, but not stoning.

The Gospel says that Joseph was “just” precisely because he was subject to the law as any pious Israelite. But within him, his love for Mary and his trust in her suggested a way he could remain in observance of the law and save the honor of his bride. He decided to repudiate her in secret, without making noise, without subjecting her to public humiliation. He chose the path of confidentiality, without a trial or retaliation. How holy Joseph was! We, as soon as we have a bit of gossip, something scandalous about someone else, we go around talking about it right away! Silent, Joseph. Silent.

But the evangelist Matthew adds immediately: “But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins’ ” (Mt 1:20-21). God’s voice intervenes in Joseph’s discernment. In a dream, He reveals a greater meaning than his own justice. How important it is for each one of us to cultivate a just life and, at the same time, to always feel the need for God’s help to broaden our horizons and to consider the circumstances of life from an always different, larger perspective. Many times, we feel imprisoned by what has happened to us: “But look what happened to me!” – and we remain imprisoned in that bad thing that happened to us. But particularly in front of some circumstances in life that initially appear dramatic, a Providence is hidden that takes shape over time and illuminates the meaning even of the pain that has touched us. The temptation is to close in on that pain, in that thought that good things never happen to us. And this is not good for us. This leads you to sadness and bitterness. A bitter heart is so ugly.

I would like us to pause to reflect on a detail of this story recounted in the Gospel that is often overlooked. Mary and Joseph were engaged to each other. They had probably cultivated dreams and expectations regarding their life and their future. Out of the blue, God seems to have inserted himself into their lives and, even if at first it was difficult for them, both of them opened their hearts wide to the reality that was placed before them.

Dear brothers and dear sisters, our lives are very often not what we imagine them to be. Especially in loving and affectionate relationships, it is difficult to move from the logic of falling in love to the logic of a mature love. We need to move from infatuation to mature love. You newlyweds, think about this. The first phase is always marked by a certain enchantment that makes us live immersed in the imaginary that is often not based on reality and facts – the falling in love phase. But precisely when falling in love with its expectations seems to

PLEASE PRAY FOR

St. Francis

Pete Giachetti, Ray Wanat, Irma Welty,
Melba Facey,
Christina Mora, Glenda Pearson & Barbara,
Bob Heisinger

Our Lady of the Valley

Diane & Rick Phay, Eva Rebay, Gary Freeland

St. Stephen’s

Olivia Cox, Ryan Graham, Vernon Ferreira,
Trish Bautista, Nancy Fenner, Liz Paul,
Breen Hofmann, Carl & Mary Doyle, Carol Mitchell,
Joan Knapp

come to an end, that is where true love begins or true love enters in there. In fact, to love is not the pretension that the other person, or life, should correspond to our imagination. Rather, it means to choose in full freedom to take responsibility for one’s life as it comes. This is why Joseph gives us an important lesson. He chooses Mary with “his eyes open”.

And Joseph’s risk gives us this lesson: to take life as it comes. Has God intervened there? I accept it. And Joseph does what the angel of the Lord had ordered: “He took his wife, but knew her not” – without living together she is expecting a son – “until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus” (Mt 1:24-25). Christian engaged couples are called to witness to a love like this that has the courage to move from the logic of falling in love to that of mature love. This is a demanding choice that instead of imprisoning life, can fortify love so that it endures when faced with the trials of time.

What is Posada?

Las Posadas is a prayer service which commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to baby Jesus. When they were unable to find lodging in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary were forced to seek shelter in a stable, where the Christ Child was born.

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