



*Let the one among you who is without sin  
be the first to throw a stone at her.*

## *The Fifth Sunday of Lent April 3, 2022*

*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

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#### MISSIONS

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

#### MASS SCHEDULE

See "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	6:00 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—6:00 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](http://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](mailto:bobgartner@gmail.com)

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact Bob Gartner ([bobgartner@gmail.com](mailto:bobgartner@gmail.com))

### LECTORS

April 3      April 10

Jim Billo      Bob Gartner  
 Kathy Billo      Tom Weber

### CALENDAR

Sun	April 9	RCIA Class, OLV, 2:30pm
	April 9-10	Palm Sunday, Blessing of Palms-Regular Mass Schedule
Thu	April 14	Holy Thursday-Washing of the Feet, 6pm, St Francis
Fri	April 15	Good Friday-Veneration of the Cross-St Francis, 2: 30pm, St Stephen Bieber, 4:30pm, Our Lady of the Valley 6:30pm (Bilingual)
		Pontifical Good Friday Collection for the Holy Land
Sat	April 16	Pastoral Council Meeting at 3:00pm OLV
		Easter Vigil, OLV, 4:30pm
		Easter Vigil, St Francis, 7pm
Sun	April 17	Easter, Regular Mass Schedule

### Offertory Collections

	Fiscal Year-to-Date		%
	Actual	Budget Difference	
St. Francis	31,839	34,111 -2,272	-6.7%
OLV-English	17,129	15,316 1,813	11.8%
OLV-Spanish	14,017	14,109 -92	-0.7%
St. Stephen's	17,771	19,544 -1,773	-9.1%
WeShare	9,430	7,756 1,674	21.6%
Other	180	0 180	
<b>Total Collections</b>	<b>90,366</b>	<b>90,836 -470</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>

### REFLECTION

Christ our Redeemer came into the world to free us from the slavery of sin. He wants to condemn sin but save every sinner. These final days of Lent are the time to prepare our hearts to receive the grace of the Redeemer. Let us acknowledge our sins, receive his saving mercy, and extend that mercy to others.

### 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

- **Parish Council Meeting** is scheduled for Saturday, **April 16th, at 3:00 pm**, at Our Lady of the Valley.
- **Offertory Collections** are 0.5% **under budget**.

### Gospel Reflection by Benedict XVI

We have reached the Fifth Sunday of Lent in which the Liturgy this year presents to us the Gospel episode of Jesus who saves an adulterous woman condemned to death (Jn 8:1–11). While he is teaching at the Temple the Scribes and Pharisees bring Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery for which Mosaic law prescribed stoning. Those men ask Jesus to judge the sinful woman in order “to test him” and impel him to take a false step. The scene is full with drama: the life of that person and also his own life depend on Jesus. Indeed, the hypocritical accusers pretend to entrust the judgement to him whereas it is actually he himself whom they wish to accuse and judge. Jesus, on the other hand, is “full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14): he can read every human heart, he wants to condemn the sin but save the sinner, and unmask hypocrisy. St. John the Evangelist highlights one detail: while his accusers are insistently interrogating him, Jesus bends down and starts writing with his finger on the ground. St. Augustine notes that this gesture portrays Christ as the divine legislator: in fact, God wrote the law with his finger on tablets of stone (cf. Commentary on John’s Gospel, 33,5). Thus Jesus is the Legislator, he is Justice in person. And what is his sentence? “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her”. These words are full of the disarming power of truth that pulls down the wall of hypocrisy and opens consciences to a greater justice, that of love, in which consists the fulfilment of every precept (cf. Rom 13:8–10). This is the justice that also saved Saul of Tarsus, transforming him into St Paul (cf. Phil 3:8–14).

When his accusers “went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest”, Jesus, absolving the woman of her sin, ushers her into a new life oriented to good. “Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again”. It is the same grace that was to make the Apostle say: “One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13–14). God wants only goodness and life for us; he provides for the health of our soul through his ministers, delivering us from evil with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so that no one may be lost but all may have the opportunity to convert. In this Year for Priests I would like to urge Pastors to imitate the holy Curé d’Ars in the ministry of sacramental pardon so that the faithful may discover its meaning and beauty and be healed by the merciful love of God, who “even forces himself to forget the future so that he can grant us his forgiveness!” (Letter to Priests for the Inauguration of the Year for Priests, 16 June 2009).

Dear friends, let us learn from the Lord Jesus not to judge and not to condemn our neighbor. Let us learn to be intransigent with sin starting with our own! and indulgent with people. May the holy Mother of God, free from

all sin, who is the mediatrix of grace for every repentant sinner, help us in this.

### From the General Audience of Pope Francis

In our path of catechesis on the theme of old age, today we will look at the tender picture painted by the evangelist Saint Luke, who depicts two elderly figures, Simeon and Anna. Their reason for living, before taking leave of this world, is to await God’s visit. They were waiting for God, that is, Jesus, to visit them. Simeon knows, by a premonition of the Holy Spirit, that he will not die before seeing the Messiah. Anna attends the temple every day, devoting herself to his service. Both of them recognize the presence of the Lord in the child Jesus, who fills their long wait with consolation and reassures them as they bid farewell to life. This is a scene of encounter with Jesus, and of farewell.

What can we learn from these two elderly figures filled with spiritual vitality?

First, we learn that the fidelity of waiting sharpens the senses. Besides, as we know, the Holy Spirit does precisely this: enlightens the senses. In the ancient hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, with which we continue to this day to invoke the Holy Spirit, we say: “*Accende lumen sensibus*”, “Guide our minds with your blest light”, enlighten our senses. The Spirit is capable of doing this: of sharpening the senses of the soul, despite the limits and the wounds of the senses of the body. Old age weakens, in one way or another, the sensibility of the body: one is going blind, another one deaf. However, an old age spent in awaiting God’s visit will not miss his passage; on the contrary, it will be even more ready to grasp it, will have greater sensitivity to welcome the Lord when he passes. Remember that it is typical of the Christian to be attentive to the visits of the Lord, because the Lord passes in our life, with inspirations, with invitations to better ourselves. And Saint Augustine used to say: “I fear that Jesus will pass me by unnoticed”. It is the Holy Spirit who prepares the senses to understand when the Lord is visiting us, just as he did with Simeon and Anna.

Today we need this more than ever: we need an old age gifted with lively spiritual senses capable of recognizing the signs of God, or rather, the Sign of God, who is Jesus. A sign that challenges us, always: Jesus challenges us because he is “a sign that is spoken against” (Lk 2: 34) – but which fills us with joy. Because crisis does not necessarily bring sadness, no: being in crisis in service to the Lord very often gives you peace and joy. The anesthesia of the spiritual senses – and this is bad – the anesthesia of the spiritual senses, in the excitement and stultification of those of the body, is a widespread syndrome in a society that cultivates the illusion of eternal youth, and its most dangerous feature lies in the fact that it is mostly unaware. We do not realize we are anaesthetized. And this happens. It happens. It has always happened and it happens in our times. Numbed senses, without understanding what is happening: when they are numb, the inner senses, the senses of the Spirit that enable us to understand the presence of God or the presence of evil, cannot distinguish between them.

When you lose the sense of touch or of taste, you re-

alize immediately. However, you can ignore that of the soul, that sensitivity of the soul, for a long time, living without realizing that you have lost the sensitivity of the soul. It is not simply a matter of thinking of God or religion. The insensitivity of the spiritual senses relates to compassion and pity, shame and remorse, fidelity and devotion, tenderness and honor, responsibility for oneself and for others. It is curious: insensitivity stops you understanding compassion, it stops you understanding pity, it stops you feeling shame or having remorse for having done something bad... It is like that. The numbed spiritual senses confuse you and you no longer feel those things, spiritually. And old age becomes, so to speak, the first casualty, the first victim of this loss of sensibility. In a society that exercises sensibility primarily for enjoyment, there cannot but be a lack of attention to the frail, and the competition of the winners prevails. And this is how sensitivity is lost. Certainly, the rhetoric of inclusion is the ritual formula of every politically correct discourse. But it still does not bring about a real correction of the practices of normal co-existence: a culture of social tenderness struggles to grow. The spirit of human fraternity – which I felt it was necessary to relaunch forcefully – is like a discarded garment, to be admired, but ... in a museum. One loses human sensibility, these movements of the Spirit that make us human.

It is true, in real life we can observe, with moving gratitude, many young people capable of honoring this fraternity to its fullest. But herein, exactly, lies the problem: there is a gap, a shameful gap, between the testimony of this lifeblood of social tenderness and the conformism that compels youth to present itself in an entirely different way. What can we do to bridge this gap?

From the story of Simeon and Anna, but also from other biblical accounts of the Spirit-sensitive elderly, comes a hidden indication that deserves to be brought to the forefront. In what, in real terms, does the revelation that kindles the sensitivity of Simeon and Anna consist? It consists in recognizing in a child, whom they did not beget and whom they see for the first time, the sure sign of God's visitation. They accept not to be protagonists, but only witnesses. And when one accepts not being a protagonist, but gets involved as a witness, it is good: that man or that woman is maturing well. But those who always want to be protagonist and nothing else, never mature on that journey towards the fullness of old age. God's visitation is not embodied in their lives, it does not bring them onto the scene as saviors: God does not take flesh in their generation, but in the generation to come. They lose their spirit, they lose the desire to live with maturity, and as one usually says, they live in a superficial way. It is the great generation of the superficial, who do not allow themselves to feel things with the sensibility of the Spirit. But why do they not let themselves? Partly out of laziness, and partly because they are already unable: they have lost it. It is bad when a civilization loses the sensibility of the Spirit. On the contrary, it is wonderful when we find elderly people like Simeon and Anna who conserve this sensibility of the Spirit, and who are capable of understanding the different situations, just as these two understood the situation in front of them, which was the manifestation of the Messiah. There is no resentment and no recrimination for this, when they are in this state of stillness, of being still. Instead, great emotion and great comfort when the spiritual senses

## 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

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

### The Holy Father's Prayer Intention (April) For health care workers

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

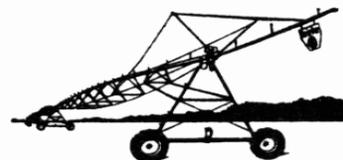
are still lively. The emotion and comfort of being able to see and announce that the history of their generation is not lost or wasted, thanks to an event that is incarnate and manifested in the generation that follows. And this is what elderly people feel when the grandchildren come to speak with them: they feel revived. "Ah, my life is still here". It is so important to go to see the elderly; it is so important to listen to them. It is so important to speak with them, because there is this exchange of civilization, this exchange of maturity between the young and the elderly. And in this way, our civilization advances in a mature way.

Only spiritual old age can give this witness, humble and dazzling, making it authoritative and exemplary for all. Old age that has cultivated the sensitivity of the soul extinguishes all envy between generations, all resentment, all recrimination for an advent of God in the generation to come, which arrives together with the departure of one's own. And this is what happens to an elderly person who is open to a young person who is open: he or she bids farewell to life while, so to speak, "handing over" life to the new generation. And this is the farewell of Simeon and Anna: "Let your servant depart in peace". The spiritual sensitivity of old age is capable of breaking down competition and conflict between generations in a credible and definitive way. This is certainly impossible for men, but possible for God. And nowadays we are in great need of this, of the sensibility of the spirit, the maturity of the spirit; we need wise, elders, mature in spirit, who give hope for life!

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