

that of the "Ancient of days" in Daniel's prophecy. He is as old as all of humanity, but even older. He is as ancient and new as the eternity of God. For the eternity of God is like this, ancient and new, because God surprises us with his newness, he always comes to meet us every day in a special way for us, in that moment. He is always renewing himself: God is eternal, he is from all time, we can say that there is like an old age with God, that's not true, but he is eternal, he renews himself.

In the Eastern Churches, the Feast of the Meeting with the Lord, celebrated on 2 February, is one of the twelve great feasts of the liturgical year. This feast places emphasis on the meeting of Jesus with the old man Simeon in the Temple, it places emphasis on the meeting between humanity, represented by the watchman Simeon, and Anna, with the little Lord Christ, the eternal Son of God, made man. An extremely beautiful icon of this scene can be admired here in Rome among the mosaics in Santa Maria in Trastevere.

In the Byzantine liturgy, the Bishop prays with Simeon: "He is the child born of the Virgin. He is the Word and God of God, the One, who for our sake was incarnate and saved man." And it continues, "The door of heaven is opened today: the eternal Word of the Father, having assumed a temporal nature, without giving up his divinity, is presented by his will in the temple under the Law by the Virgin Mary, and the watchman takes him in his arms". These words express the profession of faith from the first four Ecumenical Councils, which are sacred for all the Churches. But Simeon's action is also the most beautiful icon for the special vocation of old age. Looking at Simeon, we behold the most beautiful icon of old age – to present the children who come into the world as an uninterrupted gift to God, knowing that one of them is the Son generated within God's own intimacy, before all the ages.

Old age, on its way to a world in which the love that God has infused into Creation will finally radiate without obstacles, must accomplish this gesture performed by Simeon and Anna, before taking its leave. Old age must bear witness – for me this is the core, the most central aspect of old age – old age must bear witness to children that they are a blessing. This witness consists in their initiation – beautiful and difficult – into the mystery of our destination in life that no one can annihilate, not even death. To bring the witness of faith before a child is to sow that life. To bear the witness of humanity too, and of faith, is the vocation of the elderly. To give children the reality that they have lived as a witness, to bear witness. We old people are called to this, to bear witness, so that they might bring it forward.

The witness of the elderly is credible to children. Young people and adults are not capable of bearing witness in such an authentic, tender, poignant way, as elderly people can. It is irresistible when an old person blesses life as it comes their way, laying aside any resentment for life as it goes away. There is no bitterness because time is passing by and he or she is about to move on. No. There is that joy of good wine, of wine that has aged well with the years. The witness of the elderly unites the generations of life, the same with the dimensions of time: past, present and future, for they are not only the memory, they are the present as well as the promise. It is painful – and harmful – to see that the ages of life are conceived of as separate worlds, in competition among themselves, each one seeking to live at the expense of the other: this is not right. Humanity is ancient, very ancient, if we consider time measured by the

PLEASE PRAY FOR

St. Francis
Ray Wanat, Irma Welty, Melba Facey, Christina Mora,
Glenda Pearson & Barbara, Bob Heisinger

Our Lady of the Valley
Rick Phay, Gary Freeland

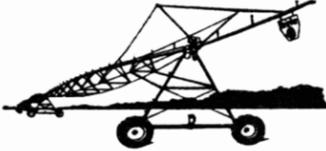
St. Stephen's
Olivia Cox, Ryan Graham, Vernon Ferreira,
Trish Bautista, Nancy Fenner, Liz Paul,
Breen Hofmann, Carl & Mary Doyle, Carol Mitchell,
Joan Knapp, Chris Patterson

The Holy Father's Prayer Intention (August)
For small businesses
We pray for small and medium sized businesses; in the
midst of economic and social crisis, may they find ways to
continue operating, and serving their communities.

clock. But the Son of God, who was born of a woman, is the First and the Last for every time. This means that no one falls outside of his eternal generation, outside of his glorious might, outside of his loving proximity.

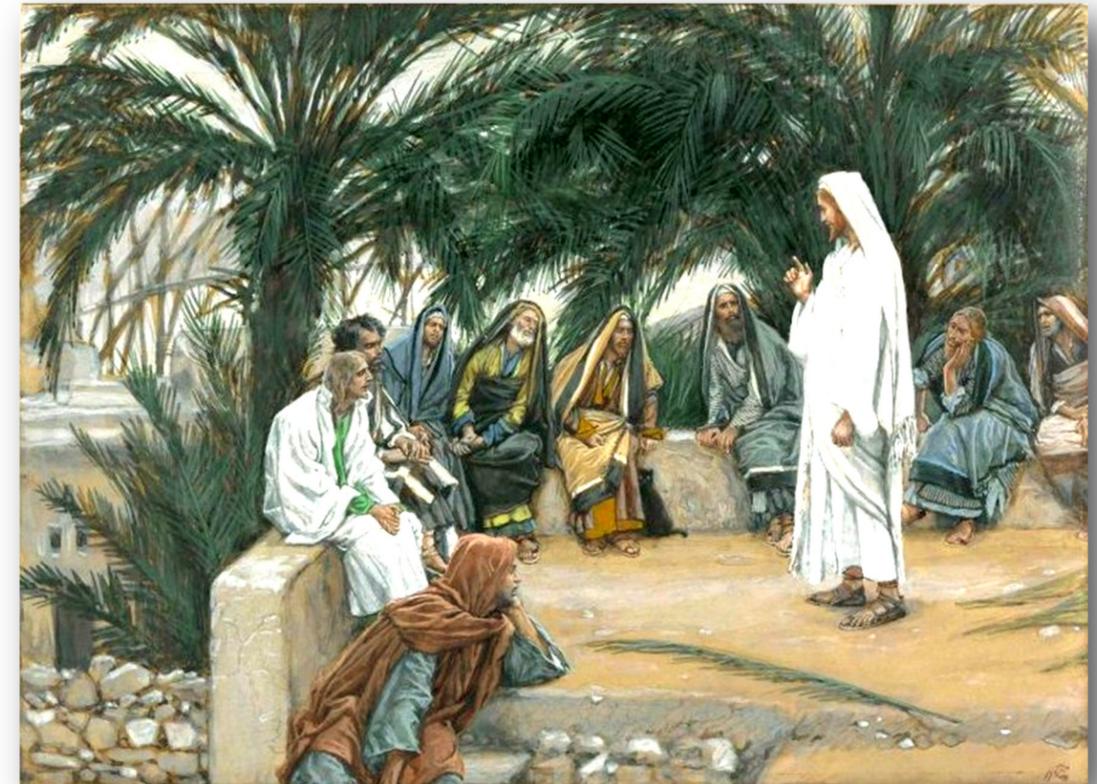
The alliance – and I am saying alliance – the alliance between the elderly and children will save the human family. There is a future where children, where young people speak with the elderly. If this dialogue does not take place between the elderly and the young, the future cannot be clearly seen. The alliance between the elderly and children will save the human family. Can we please give back to children, who need to learn to be born, the tender witness of the elderly who possess the wisdom of dying? Will this humanity, which with all its progress seems to be an adolescent born yesterday, be able to retrieve the grace of an old age that holds firmly to the horizon of our destination? Death is certainly a difficult passage from life for all of us it is a difficult passage. All of us must go there, but it is not easy. But death is also a passage that concludes the time of uncertainty and throws away the clock. This is difficult because this is the passage of death. For the beautiful part of life, which has no more deadlines, begins precisely then. But it begins from the wisdom of that man and that woman, the elderly, who are capable of bearing witness to the young. Let us think about dialogue, about the alliance between the elderly and children, of the elderly with young people, and let us do it in such a way that this bond is not broken. May the elderly have the joy of speaking, of expressing themselves with the young, and may the young seek out the elderly to receive the wisdom of life from them.

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Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.

Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 21, 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 Asis
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 Eucarista. 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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Parochial Administrator**

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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

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

All Fridays	After Mass until 10 AM	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.

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. Classes meet the second and fourth Saturday's at Our Lady of the Valley, 2:30-4:00 PM.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact Bob Gartner (bobgartner@gmail.com)

LECTORS

August 21	August 28
Jim Billo	Karen Churney
Cathy Billo	Bob Gartner

CALENDAR

Thu	Sept 1	World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation
Fri	Sept 2	Mass and Birthday Party for Fr. Meza at Our Lady of the Valley at 6:30 PM.
Mon	Sept 5	Labor Day
Thu	Sept 8	Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Wed	Sept 14	Exaltation of the Holy Cross

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

Sunday Readings

First Reading: Isaiah 66:18–21
Psalm 117:1, 2
Second Reading: Hebrews 12:5–7, 11–13
Gospel: Luke 13:22–30

Offertory Collections

	Fiscal Year Thru			
	8/7/2022			
	Actual	Budget	Difference	%
St. Francis	3,858	5,400	-1,542	-28.6%
OLV-English	2,744	2,458	286	11.6%
OLV-Spanish	2,482	2,308	174	7.6%
St. Stephen's	2,501	2,908	-407	-14.0%
WeShare	512	277	235	85.0%
Other	20	0	20	
Total Collections	12,117	13,350	-1,233	-9.2%

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

- **CCD Registration** for the children at Our Lady of the Valley will be this Sunday, August 21st, after the 11 AM Mass. Kenia Howard will be there to take registrations.
- We will have a **Mass and Birthday Party for Fr. Meza** on Friday, September 2nd, at Our Lady of the Valley at 6:30 PM.
- **We were born Ready Campaign** Join us! **"We Were Born Ready"** is a forum to empower, equip, mobilize, and resource Catholics to fulfill their baptismal call to serve women, children, and families, especially women in difficult and unexpected pregnancies. Catholics are called to take an active role in legislative issues that harm those most vulnerable in our society. For more information: wewerebornready.com. Questions? Moises De Leon - 916-733-0133 - mdeleon@scd.org
- Mark your calendars for the **parish-wide picnic** to be held at the Lion's Community Park in Fall River Mills on Sunday, September 18th. The event will start with a bilingual Mass at 11am. Following Mass, come join St. Francis, Our Lady of the Valley and St. Stephen's parishioners for an afternoon of fun in the park with a potluck lunch, games, and music. Drinks and paper goods (plates, utensils, cups) will be provided. Please bring a potluck dish to share and lawn chairs. *Note that Mass at Our Lady of the Valley will be celebrated on Saturday, September 17th at 4:30pm but this bilingual Mass will be the only Mass celebrated on Sunday.
- The **Diocesan Collection for Priests Retirement** will be taken on September 10/11.

Gospel Reflection from Benedict XVI

Today's liturgy presents to us enlightening yet at the same time disconcerting words of Christ.

On his last journey to Jerusalem someone asked him: "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And Jesus answered: "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Lk 13:23–24).

What does this "narrow door" mean? Why do many not succeed in entering through it? Is it a way reserved for only a few of the chosen?

Indeed, at close examination this way of reasoning by those who were conversing with Jesus is always timely: the temptation to interpret religious practice as a source of privileges or security is always lying in wait.

Actually, Christ's message goes in exactly the opposite direction: everyone may enter life, but the door is "narrow" for all. We are not privileged. The passage to eternal life is open to all, but it is "narrow" because it is demanding: it requires commitment, self-denial and the mortification of one's selfishness.

Once again, as on recent Sundays, the Gospel invites us to think about the future which awaits us and for which we must prepare during our earthly pilgrimage.

Salvation, which Jesus brought with his death and Resurrection, is universal. He is the One Redeemer and invites everyone to the banquet of immortal life; but on one and the same condition: that of striving to follow and imitate him, tak-

ing up one's cross as he did, and devoting one's life to serving the brethren. This condition for entering heavenly life is consequently one and universal.

In the Gospel, Jesus recalls further that it is not on the basis of presumed privileges that we will be judged but according to our actions. The "workers of iniquity" will find themselves shut out, whereas all who have done good and sought justice at the cost of sacrifices will be welcomed.

Thus, it will not suffice to declare that we are "friends" of Christ, boasting of false merits: "We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets" (Lk 13:26).

True friendship with Jesus is expressed in the way of life: it is expressed with goodness of heart, with humility, meekness and mercy, love for justice and truth, a sincere and honest commitment to peace and reconciliation.

We might say that this is the "identity card" that qualifies us as his real "friends"; this is the "passport" that will give us access to eternal life.

Dear brothers and sisters, if we too want to pass through the narrow door, we must work to be little, that is, humble of heart like Jesus, like Mary his Mother and our Mother. She was the first, following her Son, to take the way of the Cross and she was taken up to Heaven in glory, an event we commemorated a few days ago. The Christian people invoke her as *Ianua Caeli*, Gate of Heaven. Let us ask her to guide us in our daily decisions on the road that leads to the "gate of Heaven".

From the Audience of Pope Francis (8/17/2022)

The words we heard of Daniel's dream evoke a mysterious, and at the same time, glorious, vision of God. This vision is picked up at the beginning of the Book of Revelation in reference to the Risen Jesus, who appears to the Seer as Messiah, Priest and King, eternal, omniscient and unchanging (1:12-15). He lays his hand on the shoulder of the Seer and reassures him, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (vv. 17-18). Thus disappears the last barrier of fear and anguish that a theophany has always provoked. The Living One reassures us, he gives us security. He too died, but now occupies the place destined for him –the First and the Last place.

In this intertwining of symbols – there are many symbols here – there is an aspect that perhaps might help us better understand the connection of this theophany, this apparition of God, with the cycle of life, historical time, the lordship of God over the created world. And this aspect is specifically connected with old age. How is it connected? Let's see.

The vision communicates an impression of vigour and strength, of nobility, of beauty and charm. His clothing, his eyes, his voice, his feet – everything is glorious in this vision: it is all about a vision! His hair, however, is white – like wool, like snow – like the hair of an old man. The most widely-used biblical term indicating an old man is "zaqen", which comes from "zaqan", and means "beard". Snow-white hair is an ancient symbol of a very long time, of time immemorial, of an eternal existence. We do not need to demythologize everything for children – the image of a God, who is watching over everything with snow-white hair, is not a silly symbol, it is a biblical image, it is a noble image, even a tender image. The Figure in Revelation that stands amidst the golden lampstands overlaps