

Mass Intentions

December 19 - December 25

Monday, 12/19 9:00 a.m. Lena A. Jenkins
Tuesday, 12/20 9:00 a.m. Steven Robert Lewis
Wednesday, 12/21 9:00 a.m. Bill Lander
 7:30 p.m. Brenda Hebron
Thursday, 12/22 9:00 a.m. Julia Claire Young
Friday, 12/23 9:00 a.m. Benicio Huaman
Saturday, 12/24 4:00 p.m. Our Priests Intentions
 6:00 p.m. Our Priests Intentions
 8:00 p.m. Our Priests Intentions
 11:00 p.m. *Pro populo*
Sunday, 12/25 8:00 a.m. Marie & James Galvin
 9:30 a.m. Don Smith
 11:15 a.m. Jose Relunia, Sr.

No 1:00 or 5:00 p.m. Masses

Please pray for the sick... Catherine Franck, Tom Carrington, Bob Coyne, Jeni Stepanek, Robert Dax. (Names will remain on this list for four consecutive weeks, but can be repeated by calling the Office.)

Readings for the Week of December 18, 2016

Sunday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24
Monday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25/Ps 71/Lk 1:5-25
Tuesday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24/Lk 1:26-38
Wednesday: Sg 2:8-14/Ps 33/Lk 1:39-45
Thursday: 1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2/Lk 1:46-56
Friday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25/Lk 1:57-66
Next Sunday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/
 Mt 1:1-25
Christmas Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18

Scripture Corner

EMMANUEL

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed a special virgin who would “bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14, quoted by Matthew 1:23) Some authors translate the Hebrew word *almah* as “young woman.” But the connotation of virgin is so strong with *almah* that the Septuagint, produced some 300 years before Christ, translated the word as “virgin.” It is not surprising that Matthew would use this wonderful text of Isaiah. He adds after Emmanuel, “which means ‘God is with us.’” (Matthew 1:23) The virgin will become the mother of God!

Saint Joseph has an important role in today’s Gospel. (Matthew 1:18-24) Concerned about Mary’s pregnancy, he was planning to divorce her quietly. But the angel of the Lord assured Joseph, “It is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.” (Matthew 1:20) Joseph has an outstanding role in the First Family. He is to make sure that the child is named ‘JESUS’ The angel Gabriel had also told Mary to name her child Jesus. (Luke 1:31) This name is extremely important. It tells all the followers of our Lord the most important Christ, namely savior. Jesus means “Yahweh saves.” Jesus will shed his blood on Calvary for the forgiveness of sins of all!

Saint Joseph also is the reason for Christ being appreciated as the “Son of David.” In the genealogy of Jesus one reads, “Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah” (Matthew 1:16) A foster-father gives the title of his family to a child just as a natural father does. The important role of the title “son of David” can be seen in this Old Testament text. “The Lord swore an oath to David in truth, he will never turn back from it, ‘Your own offspring I will set upon your throne.’” (Psalm 132:11)

~ Fr. Ralph

PARISH PENANCE SERVICE

Monday, December 19

7:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: Confessions on Christmas Eve will be heard from 12:00 Noon - 1:00 p.m.

There will be no confessions heard at 3:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

*PARISH OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
 FRIDAY THRU MONDAY
 DECEMBER 23 - 26
 FOR CHRISTMAS*

Merry Christmas from the Parish Staff!

Fourth Sunday in Advent

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Who in my life, this Christmas, needs to experience from me the righteousness of Jesus' new Torah, Jesus' own compassion and tenderness touching them through me?

CHRISTMAS 2016 SCHEDULE



CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday, December 24th Vigil Masses

Family Mass with Youth & Children's Choirs	4:00 p.m.
Mass with Cantor	6:00 p.m.
Mass with Cantor, Singers, Cello	8:00 p.m.
Carols, Adult Choir, String Quarter	10:00 p.m.
Mass with Choir, incense	11:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday, Christmas Day, December 25th

Mass with Cantor, instruments	8:00 a.m.
Mass with Cantor, singers, instruments	9:30 a.m.
Mass with Contemporary Choir	11:15 a.m.

No 1:00 p.m. or 5:00 p.m. Masses

*Sunday, January 1, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Holy Day of Obligation*

Vigil Mass, Saturday December 31 - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 1 8:00, 9:30, 11:15 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

I want to make some more remarks in my column today about hospitality since we will have many more people attending Mass next weekend to celebrate Christmas with us. Here are ten ideas on making visitors feel welcome that I got from the website of the International Catholic Stewardship Council (<http://catholicstewardship.com/>). Let me share their ten ideas with you now. I have adapted them slightly for our situation.

- 1) Cultivate the virtue of hospitality at Mass.** Many people attending Mass tend to gather into little cliques and ignore people who are not part of their particular clique. They are not really inhospitable, just heedless of the need to be hospitable. Make hospitality a new habit when you go to Mass.
- 2) Come early, leave late.** Instead of rushing to Mass to be there on time, and then rushing out at its conclusion, make time to come a little early and linger just a bit later. Make room in your busy life to greet and spend time with others at Mass.
- 3) Go in peace to greet someone!** Seek out someone whom you have not met before. Shake their hand, introduce yourself, and take a few moments to welcome them to your parish home: God's house.
- 4) Welcome everyone.** Not only visitors need your warm welcome, regular Mass attendees need a friendly greeting. Develop a good handshake and be enthusiastic about your parish. You are greeting others in the name of Christ.
- 5) Help newcomers connect.** While you are getting to know visitors, introduce them to other parishioners as the opportunity presents itself. Feel free to invite visitors to sit next to you.
- 6) Say goodbye with genuine warmth.** After Mass, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Introduce them to me if the opportunity arises.
- 7) Avoid parish business.** Avoid conducting parish business with others just before or after Mass. Focus on visitors.
- 8) Give visitors information about the parish.** Ensure that a visitor has a bulletin or other literature available at the information desk about the parish before they leave. If there is a social gathering after Mass, invite them.
- 9) Be part of a greeting ministry team.** We are always happy when people join our Joyful Greeters ministry. Parishioners of all ages set the tone for the worship experience by offering a warm welcome outside at the entrance doors to church and a warm dismissal at the end of Mass. The ministry has made many parishioners and visitors to the parish feel welcome. If you are interested being a Joyful Greeter, please contact the coordinator for this ministry: Helen Hayes. Her contact information is the following: Helenhayes@aol.com; 240-601-5952. You can also contact the assistant coordinator for the Joyful Greeters: Jack Price. His contact information is the following: jack-price1254@aol.com; 301-963-2925.

Continued in the column to the left.....

**PLEASE NOTE - THERE WILL BE NO
9:00 A.M. DAILY MASS ON
CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24.**

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

10) Greet those who already minister in the area of hospitality. It isn't necessary to neglect the people who are already ministers of hospitality in order to make visitors feel at home. A simple wave and a smile go a long way.

I wish everyone well with the last minute shopping, party preparations, travel arrangements. But please remember: Jesus is the reason for the season!

Until next week (when it will be Christmas!),

*Fr. John Dillon
Pastor*

December 18, 2016

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING The Lamb of God Prayer Group will **NOT** meet on Tuesday, December 20. For more information, please call Louise, (301) 977-5217.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next weekend will go to the Prison Ministry Outreach Program. *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.

ROSARY FOR PRIESTS

Every Wednesday evening at 6:45 p.m. we pray the rosary for our priests before the 7:30 p.m. Mass.

ROSARY CENACLE OF OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE
Cenacle of Our Lady, Queen of Peace to pray for priests and vocations, 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the St. Clare's Chapel (Rectory) every Sunday. Please join us.

HOLY HOUR FOR THE DYING

On Thursday evenings in the St. Clare 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.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS - COUNCIL 2323

The Knights of Columbus are actively pursuing new members. Our council incorporates members from St. Francis, St. Mary's and St. Martin's. Though best known for our many charitable projects, we also have a lot of fun with dinners, fund raisers, family nights and many other fraternal social occasions. If interested in learning more, please contact Gary Palmer, (301) 412-1237 or e-mail gtdbpalmer@verizon.net.

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Thank you for supporting senior religious. A sister from Indiana writes, "Because of your kindness, our elderly sisters will have the comfort, security and joy of living out their remaining years here in their home. You truly honor them and their many years of service by your generosity." Religious across the United States offer sincere thanks for your generosity to last week's collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious.

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!**

BUILD UP OUR CHURCH

Please Share Your Photos and Videos of St. Francis Events and Activities

If you haven't noticed it, St. Francis of Assisi Parish has a new Information Monitor in the Gathering Space! The Information Monitor will display pictures, videos, announcements and upcoming events of interest to St. Francis parishioners – and we need your help to keep the content fresh.

If you are at a St. Francis event where you have taken photos or videos, please e-mail them to sfadwmedia@gmail.com. Make sure to indicate where the photos were taken and ensure that people in the photos know that the images may be shared on the Information Monitor and/or the parish web site. If you have not secured permission to share the images, then please note that in the e-mail.

Alternately, if you have photos or videos that are too large to send in an e-mail, then please e-mail Communications Ministry Coordinator Melissa Egan at Melissa.egan74@verizon.net, so she can invite you to share media in a new Dropbox Shared File application named SFADerwood Media. You must have established an account on dropbox.com and downloaded the application to your computer or smartphone in order to share your photos and videos through the shared file.

If you have any questions, please send them to Melissa at Melissa.egan74@verizon.net. Thank you for helping create a more vibrant community at St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

CELEBRATE THE GIFT OF ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

Sunday, January 8, 2017

5:00 p.m. Youth Mass

The Feast of the Epiphany

A special Mass for Adults and Children
with Developmental Differences

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Sponsored by the Up County Special Needs Ministry

FAITH DIRECT

With the busy Holiday Season, enrolling in *Faith Direct* is a great way to take one item off your weekly to-do list. Pick up an enrollment form from the parish office today or enroll online at www.FaithDirect.net, our church code is **MD110**. Already using *Faith Direct*? Don't forget to add your Christmas or End of Year contributions to your account. Thank you in advance for your support and for using *Faith Direct*!

2016 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

To receive credit in 2016, your contributions must be dated December 31, 2016. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be received in the parish Office on or before Wednesday, January 4, 2017. As a reminder, the parish statement of contributions will not include your FAITHDIRECT contributions. You will receive a statement from them.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS/EVENTS

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:

Grade 4 – Sunday, Dec. 18

Monday 6:45 Session:

Grades 6, 7 & 8 – Monday, Dec. 19

(participating in the Parish Penance Service starting at 7:00 pm)

RE CLASS SCHEDULE & CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Religious Education classes will meet on a normal schedule next week, December 18, 19 and 20. There are NO Religious Education classes on the following days:

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, December 25, 26 and 27

Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, January 1, 2 and 3

Religious Education classes will resume on January 8, 9 and 10.

CATECHISTS AND AIDES NEEDED

Additional volunteers are still needed! Please consider whether you can serve as a catechist or classroom aide for our children and young people. We especially need catechists for the 6th grade on Monday and Tuesday evenings, from 6:45-8:00 p.m. If you would like to learn more about this important ministry, please contact Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 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 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.

BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN - NEW PARISH RECORD

Thank you to all who participated in last month's Baby Bottle Campaign. We raised **\$2,877.34** to help the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center buy formula, diapers, clothes, and other necessities for moms and their babies. Most importantly, we showed Christ's love to someone in need. Thanks to everyone who helped. Please pray for the loving protection of all human life from the moment of conception through natural death.

USHERS ARE NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY MASSES. We are in need of ushers for the December 24 Masses: 6:00/8:00/11:00 p.m. and December 25 Masses: 9:30 & 11:15 a.m. Masses. Please stop by the Ushers Room after Mass today to sign-up. *Thank you!*

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS/EVENTS

ST. FRANCIS YOUTH MINISTRY

Upcoming Events

**FRED
HIGH SCHOOL**

DECEMBER

18 FRED & FRED Jr. Christmas Party

FRED JR.

DECEMBER

18 FRED & FRED Jr. Christmas Party

GET SOCIAL

**Instagram "SFASusie"*

**FRED group on FACEBOOK: friend "Susan FRED Lea"*

***St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church" page on Facebook*

YOUNG ADULTS

Christ in the City: Holy Hour - 12/20/16 7:30-8:30 pm; fellowship to follow St Mary's Historic Chapel (520 Veirs Mill Rd Rockville MD 20852) Join us for praise and worship, adoration, scripture reflection, silent meditation and the option of confession.

FOR YOUNG ADULT CATHOLICS - Epiphany Party at St. Catherine Labouré Church, Saturday, January. 7, 7:00 p.m. - Midnight. Mingle with local Catholics and enjoy a delicious Greek dinner, dancing and DJ, and more. Tickets are \$21 by January 2 or \$25 cash at the door. St. Catherine Labouré, 11801 Claridge Rd., Wheaton, MD 20902. RSVP and you can pay online at: <http://slsociety.org/epiphany/>. *All are welcome!*

MARRIAGE HELP

Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi) has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. For confidential information about or to register for the January program beginning with a weekend on January 27-29, 2017, call (443) 400-7017, or e-mail: 3015@retrouvaille.org or visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

MOTHER OF GOD SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Looking for a good Catholic education for your children? Attend the Mother of God School Open House, Sunday, January 29, 1:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., 20501 Goshen Road, Gaithersburg. We have the largest Catholic Pre-K program (3's & 4's) in the area, with before and after care available year-round. Check out our rigorous academic programs for K-8th grade as well. For more information or to schedule a tour call Alice Garvey, (301) 990-2088, Ext. 11 or e-mail agarvey@mogschool.com or you can visit www.mogschool.com.

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

The Mass on Christmas Day will be celebrated by Bishop Michael Burbidge this year and will air at 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 25.

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 of the parish. Please make sure your clothing donation is clean and in good repair. Put the items in a plastic bag and deposit it in the bin. It is collected weekly and will be a great blessing to those in need in the region.

ST. MARTIN'S FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry Ministry here at St. Francis collects and delivers non-perishable food donations weekly to St. Martin's. There is a large brown bin in the Gathering Space marked "St. Martin's Food Pantry" where donations can be placed. A list of items needed can be found on the top of the bin. ***Please note: due to health/safety concerns, the pantry CANNOT distribute dented cans, opened items and food beyond its expiration date.*** Help those in our community struggling to feed their families by donating one or two non-perishable items at least once a month. This is not a onetime collection, but rather an ONGOING PROJECT! *Thank you for your continued support!*

FIND THE PERFECT GIFT.ORG

Is there someone in your life who has been away from Church for a while or may not have a place to celebrate his faith this Christmas? Christmas Mass is a beautiful moment to help others reconnect to the Catholic faith and many people are waiting for a personal invitation from someone like you! Visit FindthePerfectGift.org to see find Christmas events and Christmas Mass times across the Archdiocese of Washington!

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday, December 21, Brooke Grove Rehabilitation & Nursing Center, 18131 Slade School Road. For further information contact Bill Neely, (301) 924-5176 or bneely@bgf.org.

CATHOLICS IN ANNAPOLIS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2017

3:00 - 8:00P.M.

Mark our calendar for the 33rd Annual "Catholics in Annapolis". Meet your legislators and build a positive relationship with them by sharing the great work and the Good News of the Church in Maryland lived out through the works of our ministries, charities, hospitals, schools, parishes and communities. How? Mingle with like-minded Catholics at Catholics in Annapolis! Save the date now and watch for further information.

SERVE WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Are you inspired by Pope Francis to serve? Volunteer with Catholic Charities to care for people in need. To get started and for additional information on how you can serve visit www.CatholicCharitiesDC.org/volunteer.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION ON SAINT THOMAS MORE

In a new landmark exhibition, God's Servant First: The Life and Legacy of Thomas More, the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington DC presents the life, martyrdom, and legacy of the 16th century English philosopher-statesman whom Pope John Paul II named the heavenly Patron of Statesmen and Politicians. The exhibition also explores the connection between Thomas More, the Carroll Family of Maryland, and the foundations of religious liberty in America. It features over 60 artifacts from England and the United States, including numerous period objects from Stonyhurst College in the United Kingdom that have never been exhibited in the United States.

The exhibit runs through March 31, 2017 and is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst. The Saint John Paul II Shrine is located at 3900 Harewood Road, NE, Washington. Visit www.jp2shrine.org for additional information.

A WAY TO GROW.....Teams of Our Lady was founded by Father Henri Caffarel in France in 1947 and has spread to over 10,000 Teams world-wide. Teams came to the United States in 1958 where they are currently over 700 Teams. Teams of Our Lady is a lay movement officially recognized by the Holy See under the Pontifical Council for the Council for the Laity. A team is a group of five to seven couples and a spiritual advisor who meet once a month to share, pray and discuss challenges of living a Christian marriage and life. Couples use a time-tested format to meet their needs and desires of growing closer in love and faith through Teams of Our Lady and in the process they discover support for one another and for their marriage. For more information, please contact Fr. John in the parish office or Joe and Jeanne McElhaney at joenjeanne@mcelhaneysonline.com.