

Mass Intentions

January 2 - January 8

Monday , 1/2	9:00 a.m. Zezelle Steven
Tuesday , 1/3	9:00 a.m. Francis D'Anjolell
Wednesday , 1/4	9:00 a.m. Evelyn Meade 7:30 p.m. Matthew Chia
Thursday , 1/5	9:00 a.m. Jack Pfankuch
Friday , 1/6	9:00 a.m. Barbara Lynn Beall 7:30 p.m. Linda Quemuel
Saturday , 1/7	9:00 a.m. Elena D. Deleon 5:00 p.m. Fr. Don Worch
Sunday , 1/8	8:00 a.m. All the Souls In Purgatory 9:30 a.m. <i>Pro populo</i> 11:15 a.m. Donald Phillips 1:00 p.m. Irene & Victor Church 5:00 p.m. Catherine Sgambati

Please pray for the sick...Paul Poppernack, Sr., Carolyn Maltz, 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 January 1, 2017

Sunday:	Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21
Monday:	1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98/Jn 1:19-28
Tuesday:	1 Jn 2:29--3:6/Ps 98/Jn 1:29-34
Wednesday:	1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98/Jn 1:35-42
Thursday:	1 Jn 3:11-21/Ps 100/Jn 1:43-51
Friday:	1 Jn 5:5-13/Ps 147/Mk 1:7-11
Saturday:	1 Jn 5:14-21/Ps 149/Jn 2:1-11
Next Sunday:	Is 60:1-6/Ps 72/Eph 3:2-3, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12

Altar Servers Schedule

Please check the online Ministry Scheduler for the most recent Altar Server Schedule.

It is the responsibility of the Altar Server to get a replacement if you cannot serve at your scheduled time.

Scripture Corner

MARY AND PEACE

Today's first reading (Numbers 6:22-27) highlights the priestly blessing. The final line declares, "The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace." (Numbers 6:26) "Peace" in the Hebrew means far more than the absence of hostility. It is a very positive word, meaning fullness, completion, perfection. This word applies perfectly to Mary, whose life demonstrates her complete commitment to God. God in turn bestowed the fullness of his blessings on the mother of his Son.

On the night of Jesus' birth the heavenly host praised God as they sang, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth PEACE to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:14) That favor of God certainly rested first and foremost on the mother of our Lord. In today's second reading (Galatians 4:4-7) Saint Paul informs his readers, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, BORN OF A WOMAN, born under the law to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption." (Galatians 4:4) That woman is the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Today's gospel (Luke 2:16-21) provides details about the Holy Family. The shepherds had been informed about the wondrous birth of the Messiah, The key sentence is, "For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord." (Luke 2:11) "Messiah" and "Lord" tell who Jesus is, namely the son of David and the Son of God. "Savior" informs the reader that Christ will save his people. Jesus means "Savior." The shepherds share all these great titles of Jesus with his parents.

Saint Luke says, "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." (Luke 2:19) The importance of the words of the shepherds will become ever clearer, especially as Jesus begins his public ministry. He will be identified as the son of David, the savior and the SON OF GOD.

~ Fr. Ralph

**PARISH OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, JANUARY 2
FOR NEW YEAR'S**

Happy New Year from the Parish Staff!

The Solemnity of Mary

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

To whom do I need to bring a special greeting of Christ's peace, with the assistance of supportive friendship, this New Year's Day?

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

All are welcome! Join the Ministry of Eucharistic Adoration and assist with adoration in the following manner:

- *Become a regular attendee at adoration in the Parish.*
- *Pray that Eucharistic Adoration will increase.*
- *Foster Eucharistic Adoration in our parish by evangelizing His Eucharistic Presence.*
- *Deepen your personal relationship with Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.*

First Friday Mass will be at 7:30 p.m., January 6, followed by adoration until 9:00 p.m. in the Church.

WELCOME to the Family of Christ!

The following individuals and their families recently joined our St. Francis faith community during the month of December:

Gilbert & Josephine Gabriel
Tenneh Agnes Kromah

The following children were baptized during the month of December:

Gabriel Antonio Santiago



JANUARY 2017 LUNCH – The St. Francis Lunch Bunch will **NOT** meet in January due to the closeness to the Holidays. We will see you all on February 1. Watch the bulletin for details. If you have any questions please contact Mary Lou Habib, (301) 417-0243. Hope everyone had a joyful Christmas and wish you all a Happy & Healthy New Year! ~ *Mary Lou*

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

How do they nurture vocations?

Many of the movements/communities support and complement parish and family life by creating programs that form the spiritual, intellectual and social dimensions of children, adolescents and adults. These programs provide natural environments to nurture souls so they can discern where God is calling them, including married life, single life, priesthood, and religious or consecrated life.

Next week we shall look at Communion and Liberation.

Until next week,

Fr. John Dillon
Pastor

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

Happy New Year! Each year we come up with resolutions that we hope to keep in the New Year. Many people tell me that they want to develop a plan to grow deeper in their Catholic faith. This is a very praiseworthy goal. One way to pursue this goal could be to investigate one of the ecclesial movements that have been studied and approved by the Church. St. John Paul II said the following about them in 1998: "Ecclesial movements...represent one of the most significant fruits of that **springtime in the Church** which was foretold by the Second Vatican Council...**The presence is encouraging** because it shows that this spring time is advancing and revealing the freshness of the Christian experience based on personal encounter with Christ." Over the next several weeks I want to highlight several of the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities that have a particular presence in our parish. But today I want to discuss the Association of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities in the Archdiocese of Washington in general in the remainder of this column. To do this let me quote several questions and answers found on their website: <http://www.movementsdc.org/living-witnesses>.

Who can belong to a movement or community?

The majority of people who belong to a movement or community are baptized lay people who may be either married or single. Many movements and communities have consecrated lay members who take promises or vows of poverty, chastity and obedience similar to sisters and brothers. Diocesan priests and men and women religious can also be active participants and full-time members.

How do participants interact with their local parish?

Most participants in movements and communities also belong to local parishes. As a fruit of their parish and spiritual life it is common to find them attending daily Mass, partaking of frequent confession and spiritual direction, and serving in various parish ministries. Typically lay persons discern over time that God is calling them to complement their parish involvement and daily life with a specific ministry and/or movement or community.

How does an ecclesial movement or new community come into being?

The birth of an ecclesial movement or new community is similar to that of a traditional religious order like the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Jesuits. The Holy Spirit grants the founder or group of founders a special grace to live the Christian faith with a unique charism, fervor and dynamism, which eventually attracts others and over time develops into a particular way of life. After a certain period (usually a number of years), the bishop will evaluate the movement's statutes (basic laws and guidelines) and discern whether to formally approve it as an association of the faithful.

How do they serve people and the local Church?

They serve by helping both members and interested participants grow in holiness through a life of prayer, ongoing internal conversion, and personal formation. Although each movement/community is unique, many offer a variety of ministries including: retreat centers, schools, universities, and homes for the sick and disabled; missions to serve the poor, retreats and conferences, child, youth, and family formation; and outreach via personal evangelization, newsletters, publishing, media and communications.

Continued in the column to the left...

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING Join the Lamb of God Prayer Group for worship and the study of Scripture on Tuesday, January 3, 7:30 p.m., St. Clare's Chapel in the Rectory. For details, please call Louise, (301) 977-5217.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next weekend will go to the *Shady Grove Pregnancy Center*. 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.

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.

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

MARY AT MASS

Paul Turner

Devotion to Mary remains a hallmark of the Catholic faith. Some people unfamiliar with our religion assume that prayer to Mary forms the backbone of the Mass. Wrong! Prayer to Mary is certainly the backbone of the rosary, but there isn't a single prayer addressed to Mary in the entire Mass, front to back, on any day of the liturgical year.

When it comes to prayer, we acknowledge Hebrews 7:25, which says Christ lives for ever to make intercession for us. So we direct our prayers to God through Christ.

However, because of Mary's central role in salvation history, she makes several appearances in the texts at every Mass, every day of the liturgical year.

Most important, Mary's name is pronounced right in the heart of Mass in the Eucharistic prayer. She is called by two titles made mystic by their juxtaposition: virgin and mother. In the second Eucharistic prayer for children, she is also called "Mother of God and our mother."

Mary also appears in the Creed, as the virgin who conceived the Word made flesh.

At times we celebrate a Mass in her honor, under a title like Mary, Mother of the Church, or to commemorate an event in her life, like the Visitation. A preface often prayed on these days echoes her song of praise, the Magnificat. But most frequently she is remembered as the Virgin Mother.

By connecting these two titles of Mary, the church invites us to reflect on her son. Mary's special role as the Virgin Mother reminds us that the miraculous birth of Jesus introduced the world to an extraordinary child whose miracles would never cease.

At first, the title "Mother of God" sounds wrong. God is the uncreated creator of all. How could God have a mother? That puzzling question draws us into a deeper meditation on the identity of Jesus. Because Jesus is both fully God and fully human, Mary must be called Mother of God.

In the liturgy Mary's role always bows to her son. She gives birth to him not only in time but in the liturgy and in our hearts. During the month of May, many will address devotions to Mary, and rightly so. But she will direct them to Christ.

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"A MYSTICAL MEANING...IN A POOR PERSON'S FACE

~ Pope Francis

Is God calling you to help the needy through the St. Vincent de Paul Society? The Society at St. Francis parish needs new members. We focus on the needs of the struggling and poor in the Derwood area, and we are sometimes asked to help in nearby areas of Montgomery County as well. Pope Francis tells us that "The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found . . . in a poor person's face" (*Laudato Si*, 233). See what this "mystical meaning" is as you look into the face of the poor with the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Come see if you are called to the ministry of the Society. We meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 7:00 in the rectory Assisi Room. **Our next meetings are Thursday, January 12 and January 26.** For more information, call Tony Bosnick at 301-840-1407, Ext 11.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS/EVENTS

RE CLASS SCHEDULE & CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

There are NO Religious Education classes on the following days:

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

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

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREP DAY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7

Children preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time will attend a day of preparation on Saturday, January 7 from 9:00 am - 12:30 p.m. in the Parish Center (Snow date: January 14). Please pray for these children who will receive this Sacrament on Saturday, January 21.

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.

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.

FATHER STACK'S PLAQUE UPDATE

The final layout of the plaque has been sent to the producer. Upon acceptance of the plaque's layout by Fr. John, a contract will be let. At this time some funds are lacking and if you would still like to contribute to the plaque, please submit a check for your donation, made out to St. Francis of Assisi Church, and send it to the Parish Office. Thank you again for your monetary and spiritual support of this effort honoring our founding pastor. ~
The Fr. Stack Plaque Committee.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS/EVENTS

ST. FRANCIS YOUTH MINISTRY

Upcoming Events

FRED

JANUARY - High School

8 Epiphany Special Mass
19 Service @ Our Lord's Table
21 FRED Snow Day
22 FRED Winter Kickoff Social
27 Mass, Rally & March for Life
29 FRED

FRED JR.

JANUARY - Middle School

8 Epiphany Special Mass
19 Service @ Our Lord's Table
27 Mass, Rally & March for Life

GET SOCIAL

**Instagram "SFASusie"*

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

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

ST MARTIN'S FOOD PANTRY MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

Are you looking for a ministry to join in the New Year? How about giving one hour every other month helping with the Food Pantry Ministry Team? Duties consist of removing the non-perishable food in the bin located by the glass doors and delivering it to St. Martin's Food Pantry, which is only a short 10 minute drive to Old Town, Gaithersburg. Please contact Carolyn Brauer at carolyn_brauer@yahoo.com or Christine Young at youngbodywork@hotmail.com for more information or to join.

HELPING SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY

The Pax Christi group at St. Francis parish in partnership with our friends at the Islamic Center of Maryland (Woodfield Road) has entered into a relationship with the Al Humayer family, Syrian refugees who recently entered the U.S. after spending three years in a Jordanian refugee camp. Several of us recently travelled to Riverdale to meet them for the first time. They shared details about the hardships they faced living for three years in a Jordanian refugee camp. There were water shortages and medical and dental care were limited. They face many obstacles to self-sufficiency but are so grateful for the support we plan to provide. We will be posting regular updates most weeks in the bulletin about how you can help provide for their needs. Many thanks to those who generously contributed through the Alternative Christmas project. Almost \$1,000 was raised and will be used towards rental assistance, transportation costs, and food. For more information, contact Mary Kate Ryner at 301-807-1355.

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

Please stop by the St. Clare Room after Mass next weekend to have your blood pressure checked. (Saturday, 5:00 p.m., Sunday, 8:00, 9:30, 11:15 a.m. Masses)

POPE FRANCIS HAS ISSUED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD DAY FOR PEACE - JANUARY 1, 2017:

“Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace”

“At the beginning of this New Year, I offer heartfelt wishes of peace to the world’s peoples and nations. . . . I wish peace to every man, woman and child, and I pray that the image and likeness of God in each person will enable us to acknowledge one another as sacred gifts endowed with immense dignity. Especially in situations of conflict, let us respect this, our ‘deepest dignity’ and make active nonviolence our way of life.

“This is the fiftieth Message for the World Day of Peace. . . . On this occasion, I would like to reflect on nonviolence as a style of politics for peace. I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values. May charity and nonviolence govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life. When victims of violence are able to resist the temptation to retaliate, they become the most credible promoters of nonviolent peacemaking. In the most local and ordinary situations and in the international order, may nonviolence become the hallmark of our decisions, our relationships and our actions, and indeed of political life in all its forms.”

You can read the whole message by searching “USCCB World Day for Peace 2017” Click: “2017 Message for the World Day for Peace”.

RETRouvaille:

A LIFELINE FOR MARRAIGES IN TROUBLE

Many marriages may experience four stages: (1) Romance, (2) Disillusionment, (3) Misery, and (4) Awakening. Marriages that end in divorce never make it to the 4th Stage of Awakening. Don’t give up without learning about the 4th Stage of Awakening. If your marriage suffers from disillusionment or misery, please contact Retrouvaille (pronounced "retro-vie" with a long "i"). The next Retrouvaille weekend is January 27-29, 2017. Please visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com, call 443-400-7017, or email 3015@Retrouvaille.org to obtain more information. All calls and inquiries are confidential.

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.

2016 CHRISTMAS TREE SALES

Yet again St. Francis had a very successful season selling Christmas trees as we earned an outstanding profit of **\$12,668** for the parish. This year, 70+ different parishioners and individuals braved the elements logging countless hours of volunteer service. I especially want to recognize **Wayne Burnside, Gary DeBalso, and Damien Clark** whose selfless sacrifice ensured our success, and **Carolyn Brauer** whose team of decorators made stunningly beautiful wreaths that sold very quickly! Also, through the generosity of our customers, we were able raise **\$1,074** for a needy family/families. My personal thanks to **Steve McCully** who once again made that happen.

Thank you everyone who contributed to making the St. Francis Christmas Tree enterprise the success that it is. ~ **Brian Pettit**

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School

Catch our Spirit

www.StJudeRockville.org

Mark your New Year calendar to visit our excellent school during our Open House! Applications for enrollment for the 2017 school year are now being accepted. Visit www.stjuderockville.org. Go to Admission, then Apply Online, then Enrollment: **TADS: Online Registration and Enrollment.**

SJRCS Open House

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

9:00-11:30a.m.

6:00-8:00 p.m.

2nd Annual SJRCS International Day!

We invite you to travel *All Over the World!*

Friday, February 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

We would love volunteers to share their cultural heritage with the students. We are asking volunteers to set up a booth that represents the country you come from. The booth should contain different artifacts from your country (flags, posters, photographs, art, etc.) We are also asking that you bring samples of food from your country for the students to try at International Day (small appetizers, small desserts, etc.). Students will get their “Passport” stamped at each country, learn about your culture, and sample the different foods. We are also looking for groups to perform during the festival. If you can set up a booth or know a group that would love to perform, please contact Mrs. Balog at Katharine.Balog@StJudeRockville.org

**JOIN THE 2017 ANNUAL POLAR BEAR PLUNGE
IN THE POTOMAC RIVER**

Do something bold in the New Year and support the work of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) in protecting the Bay. Challenge yourself in the 12th annual Polar Bear Plunge on January 28 at National Harbor, beginning at 11:00 a.m. With hundreds of other citizens, you can wade into the Potomac up to your knees or take the full plunge in this annual fundraiser. Franciscan Action Network is a sponsor. For more information and to register, search: CCAN 2017 Polar Bear Plunge.