

FROM THE PASTORS DESK

UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH

Monday, December 17th

Red Cross Blood Drive—11 AM to 7 PM (2)
Adoration and Confessions—5 to 8 PM

Tuesday, December 18th

Mass—6 and 8 AM
Bible Study—10:30 AM (Rectory)
Healing Mass—7 PM

Wednesday, December 19th

Adoration and Confessions—5 to 6:45 PM

Thursday, December 20th

Mass—6 AM and 8 AM

Friday, December 21st

Adoration 8:30 to 11:45 AM
Mass—12 Noon

Saturday, December 22nd

Life Teen—5:30 to 7:30 PM (2)

Monday, December 24th-Christmas Eve

Office Closed
Confessions—10 AM to 12 PM and 1 to 2 PM
Masses—4:30, 6:30 PM and Midnight

Tuesday, December 25th-Christmas Day

Mass—10 AM

Legend

Church (1) Padua Hall (2)
Religious Education (3) Ewald Center (4)

Mass Intentions December 17th to 23rd

12/17	8 am	Timothy Flynn (D) r/b Mike Flynn
12/18	8 am	Christopher Basiliko (D) r/b Charlie & Mercedes Basiliko
	7 pm	Hildegard Nienstedt (D) r/b Helga Cuevas
12/19	8 am	Joanne Nielsen (D) r/b Shirley Kallal
12/20	8 am	Souls in Purgatory
12/21	8 am	Father He (D)
	12 pm	Louis Butler (D) r/b Dorothy Wathen
12/22	9 am	Rosella, Howard & Martha Nerl (D) r/b Doris Pettko
	4:30 pm	Parishioners
2/23	8:15 am	Lillian, Stephen F. and Suzanne Pettko (D) r/b Doris Pettko
	11:15 am	Sami Boothe (D) r/b Cassie Boothe

The Importance of Faith

Dear Brothers and Sisters of St. Anthony's,

I got up this morning feeling good. The Parish Mission is off to a good start. Fr. Pierre, our mission priest from the Bronx, arrived safely and is comfortable living for the next few days with me in the rectory. The parish, I am sure will spoil him; all is well. So, I thought!! Then I received news of the latest scandal in the Church, which at times seems to be never ending. Although, Jesus said that scandal would inevitably arise (Lk. 17:1), it's hard when it comes on the back of all the scandals that involve the priest sexual abuse.

Now we hear of religious nuns who embezzled half a million dollars from a school in California to go on elaborate trips and casino gambling. What is going on??

In the same chapter of St. Luke's gospel, a few verses from where I just quoted, the apostles say to Jesus: "Increase our faith." And Jesus replies; "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this sycamore tree, 'be uprooted and transplanted into the sea,' and it would obey you."

Years ago, my friend Fr. Wells used to tell me; "Stackman, it's all about FAITH!" I have to admit that at the time that line seemed to me like a priestly thing to say. I didn't give much thought to it. But over time, as the various scandals have hit the Church; and many of these scandals having to do with those in positions of leadership, I have come to a new realization that those implicated in the scandals somewhere along the line, lost their faith. It's an awful indictment and I hope I am wrong in my assessment of the whole affair. But I often wonder. Something terrible went wrong.

Faith, as we know from our catechism classes, is one of the theological virtues, along with hope and charity. They are virtues that can only be given by God Himself. You can't go to 7 Eleven and get a package of theological virtues. Only from God do they descend into the open heart of those who believe. And I believe there are levels of faith. As I go through life and as I encounter the various vicissitudes of life, faith can either grow stronger or be diminished and defeated.

Faith gives us a unique view into all reality and enables the person to see things that are invisible. In those who have lost their faith, the key elements to see into reality and probe the very depths of life's meaning is all but lost. Worldly and ambitious thoughts begin to dominate a person's thinking and motivate their behavior. Ridiculous things are the result of losing faith that was once so treasured. The saying goes; "When faith falls, it falls fast, and it falls hard."

In our Tuesday morning scripture study, we have been reading through Paul's letter to the Philippians. In the very first chapter of his letter, in verse 6, we encounter these beautiful lines, which I remember well. He says; "May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to completion. Right up to the day of Christ Jesus."

These beautiful words were spoken to me at ordination by Cardinal Hickey. I remember them well, as the Cardinal gave me a reassuring gaze.

Peace, In Christ Jesus, Fr. Stack

FAITH FORMATION

There are no faith formation classes December 23rd or December 30th. We will resume classes on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th.

LIFE TEEN

Our next Life Night is Saturday, **December 22nd:** Christmas Feasting, Caroling, and Gift Exchange! All high school youth are invited to help spread Christ's love through music and song as we bring the Christmas message of hope, peace and joy to the town of North Beach! We will also do a Yankee Swap gift exchange so please bring a wrapped Christmas gift in the price range of \$5-\$20— it can be fun, silly, or nice-but something you yourself might like to receive. We will also be outside singing Christmas carols so please **DRESS WARM!**
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Looking for a place to donate this Christmas? How about helping to send a youth to summer camp? This summer we are taking a coach bus to Camp Cove Crest in Daholonega, Georgia for Life Teen Summer Camp. So far we have 18 youth signed up (with 12 spots remaining.) Some of the youth are in need of full and partial scholarships. Life Teen gives our youth an incredible opportunity to experience the Catholic Faith in a fun and powerful way. It is led by young dynamic Catholic Missionaries, Priests, and Religious. They offer high adventure rope courses, white water rafting, as well as daily Mass, Confessions and Adoration. Contact Mary Beth Woodburn at 443-646-5721 or go to LifeTeen.com if you have questions. Thank you in advance for investing in our youth and for your generosity!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

ALTAR SERVER TRAINING

January 8th at 6 pm will be the next Altar Server training led by Deacon Eric. Children in 4th grade and up are encouraged to attend if considering altar serving. Please contact Deacon Eric if interested at 410-610-3844.

THIS CHRISTMAS GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME: A TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND

Fr. Stack and the Franciscan Friars are offering a trip to the Holy Land for only \$2,895 plus tax and fuel charge, **May 14th through the 24th, 2019.** The price includes economy class airfare from Washington Dulles to Tel Aviv, 9 nights hotel accommodations (double occupancy, including taxes and service charges), breakfast and dinner daily, special Middle Eastern farewell dinner at the Christmas Hotel in Jerusalem, comprehensive sightseeing with a licensed Christian guide, all entrance fees as per itinerary, whisper headsets, land transportation by deluxe motor coach, arrival and departure transfers; group flights only and portorage of one piece of luggage at airports and hotels. Register online at:

www.tektonministries.org with a deposit of only \$300. If you have any questions see the flyers at the back of the church or call **Ginger Geisler at 443-964-8301.**

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK

Chrissy Baxter, Vicki Baxter, JB, John Bell, Sam "Bo" Bradley, Florence, Marlene Bradshaw, Dominic Brady, Jack Bragger, Jeff Carr, Ralph Carrello, Bill Carroll, Jimmy Carroll, Helga Cuevas, Luis Cuevas, Wlaine Cunnane, Jean Davis, Sig Degitz, Jo Finch, Linda Foresta, Anthony Fowler, Taylan Fowler, John P. Flynn, Noah Christopher Haas, Marie Heaton, Maslynn Holmes, Cory Honoker, Roza Ivanac, Lindsey Jay, Kayla Johnston, Shirley Kallal, William Kallal, JoAnn Kery, Richard Knupp, Rick Kollinger, Brian Lloyd, Donna Lynch, Mark Mann, Walter Matziet, Kelly McCarley, Jennifer Melanab, Maude Mangels, Margie Edwards Morgan, Sarah Olsen, Doris Pettko, Darley Phillips, Payton Phillips, Ray Pyles, Babies Ace and Troy Remer, Jonathan Rieger, Carolyn Ritch, Joel Rivera, Grayson David Rodriguez, Wayne Romanek, Geri Rosen, Kristy Salek, Bunny Tate, Betty Theurer, Carolyn Vargas, Susan Vilcheck, Pat Waak, Chelsea Whittington, Shannon Wink, Sue White.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 23RD, 2018

First Reading: Micah 5:1-4a

Micah speaks of the ruler who will come from Bethlehem. He discusses how the people of Israel will be saved from corruption and live in peace.

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

Paul describes to the Hebrews how Jesus came into the world and offered to do God's will. We were saved through his sacrifice, the only offering sufficient for the sins of the world.

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Mary paid a visit to Elizabeth, whose baby stirred in her womb upon hearing Mary's greeting. Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Elizabeth was deeply overjoyed that the words God had spoken to Mary had now been fulfilled.

Contributions and Donations

Thank you for your continued support of the parish.

December 1st/2nd — \$7,640.91
Immaculate Conception—\$1,368.27
Retirement for Religious —\$2,103.33
Faith Direct November—\$11,465.00

"Giving Tree" gifts are due back this weekend!

St. Bernardine's Food Pantry: On the fourth Sunday of each month we invite you to bring non-perishable foods to any Mass for St. Bernardine's Parish (in Suitland) for their food pantry. You may leave your donations in the large white baskets in the foyer of the church. The designated dates this month are:

December 22nd and 23rd