

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH

Lord, Make Me An Instrument of Your Peace.

December 19, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“BLESSED ARE YOU WHO BELIEVED
THAT WHAT WAS SPOKEN TO YOU BY THE LORD
WOULD BE FULFILLED.”

—LUKE 1:45

A MESSAGE FROM FR. MATT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Why do you think Elizabeth called Mary "Blessed"?

The obvious answer is right. Mary is blessed because by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, Mary has conceived in her womb the long awaited Messiah. Mary knows that God has chosen her to bring forth His Son. Mary knows it because the Angel Gabriel told her. This Child will change everything. God has come down from Heaven to be one of us. To be God-with-us. This is Who is inside of Mary. And Mary knows it.

But does Elizabeth know it? I think for sure that there was an amazing moment that gave Elizabeth some clarity. The moment she heard Mary's greeting. Elizabeth knew that her son John would play an important role in the coming of the Messiah. When she felt the child in her womb leap for Joy at hearing Mary's voice and at that moment she knew Who was in the womb of her cousin Mary. It is an amazing, out of this world moment. But what Elizabeth says to Mary gives us an insight into the way that Mary was blessed in herself. In a not so out of this world way.

Elizabeth says, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Is this just two ways of saying that Mary is blessed because of Who she is carrying? Maybe. Probably. But the answer to Elizabeth's next question may give us something to think about. Elizabeth asks, "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" What is the answer? It isn't something supernatural. It is found in the very first line of the Gospel passage for this week. "Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste." How does it happen that Mary came to help Elizabeth? It happened because Mary decided to do it!

Think about it. Mary has just learned the most amazing news in the history of history. She is newly pregnant, probably scared, probably not feeling great. Her whole life, all of her plans and goals, have been turned on their heads. If anyone could be excused of thinking of themselves for a minute, for taking a beat to take this huge news and huge change in, it is Mary. But Mary doesn't do that. When Mary hears that Elizabeth, many years older than her, is pregnant, she puts herself aside and goes to help Elizabeth. Mary puts the needs of others before her own. She doesn't think about herself. It isn't all about her. To Mary, God is first. She has shown that by saying yes. To Mary, others are second. She has shown that by going in haste to help Elizabeth. To Mary, she herself is third.



Now listen, I am not saying that the whole baby leaping in the womb part isn't a sign of Mary's blessedness. But on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception we talked about the fact that Mary is not to be seen as separate or so different from us that we could never be her peer. The whole reason for Jesus' coming is that we could see this as our destiny. Mary is the best of humanity. She is what God made each of us to be. To be fully human, like Mary, is the reason that God gives us the Church and Sacraments, that little by little we can become more like the Mother of the New Creation, more like Mary. So today we are given an example to follow that we might do that.

Mary is indeed Blessed in that she is the Mother of Our Lord. But that singular role is not the only way, lest we think that we cannot emulate her. She is blessed and she is a blessing to Elizabeth because she showed up to help. She has a generous heart. She puts God first, others second and herself third.

Keep this example of blessedness in your heart as we approach Christmas. Be a blessing to your family and friends this week. Keep God first and put the needs of others before your own. Be a blessing to everyone who encounters you. Be like Mary.

Peace and Love,
Fr. Matt

Mass Intentions for the Week

| Date | Time | Location | Intention | Offered By |
|--|-------------------|------------|---|---------------------------|
| Saturday, December 18 | 4:00 PM VIGIL | St. Mary | Dale Karenbauer | Marge & Deb |
| | 5:30 PM VIGIL | St. Joseph | Bastian & Thoma Families | Phyllis Bastian |
| Sunday, December 19 4th Sunday of Advent | 8:00 AM | St. Joseph | For the Parishioners of Saint Francis of Assisi | |
| | 8:30 AM | St. John | Violetta Collins | Marsha Galan & John Smith |
| | 10:00 AM | St. Mary | Steven Biedenbach | The Legion of Mary |
| | 11:00 AM | St. Joseph | Olimpia Karlo | Grandchildren |
| Monday, December 20 | 8:00 AM | St. Mary | Steve Biedenbach | Gary & Fran Beers |
| Tuesday, December 21 St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church | 8:00 AM | St. John | Bob Franz | Paul & Bonnie Bergbigler |
| Wednesday, December 22 | 9:00 AM | St. Joseph | Michael Phillippi | Mother |
| Thursday, December 23 St. John of Kanty, Priest | 8:00 AM | St. Mary | Mary, Louis, and Kenny Wagner | Cathy (Wagner) Slagle |
| Friday, December 24 Christmas Eve | 9:00 AM | St. Joseph | Priest's Intention | |
| | 4:00 PM VIGIL | St. Joseph | Parishioners of Saint Francis of Assisi | |
| | 6:00 PM VIGIL | St. Mary | Terry Collins | Family |
| | 7:00 PM VIGIL | St. John | Parishioners of Saint Francis of Assisi | |
| | 10:00 PM VIGIL | St. Joseph | Parishioners of Saint Francis of Assisi | |
| | 10:00 PM VIGIL | St. Mary | Hubert & Rita Michel | Family |
| Saturday, December 25 The Nativity of the Lord | 8:00 AM | St. John | Parishioners of Saint Francis of Assisi | |
| | 10:00 AM | St. Joseph | Parishioners of Saint Francis of Assisi | |
| | 10:00 AM | St. Mary | Parishioners of Saint Francis of Assisi | |
| Sunday, December 26 The Holy Family | 8:00 AM | St. Joseph | Living & Deceased of the Brosenitsch & Harvey Families | ~ |
| | 8:30 AM | St. John | Denny Rodgers | Family |
| | 10:00 AM | St. Mary | Violetta Collins | Dave & Linda Michel |
| | 11:00 AM | St. Joseph | Fred & Wanda Morabito | Al & Joan Depew |

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Amy Majersky - St. Joseph Preschool Ext. 209

Amy Pettinato- St. Mary Preschool Ext. 221



Readings for the week of December 19, 2021

Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45

Monday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 [cf. 7c and 10b]/Lk 1:26-38

Tuesday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 [1a; 3a]/Lk 1:39-45

Wednesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd [cf. 1a]/Lk 1:46-56

Thursday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14 [cf. Lk 21:28]/Lk 1:57-66

Friday: Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 [2]/Lk 1:67-79

Saturday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 [2a]/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 [Lk 2:11]/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 [3c]/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Next Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1]/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/Lk 2:41-52 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10 [cf. 5a]/1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24/Lk 2:41-52

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

| | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|
| Saturdays, | St. Mary | 11am - 12pm |
| | St. Joseph | 12pm - 1pm |
| | St. John | 12pm - 12:30pm |

SCHEDULING SACRAMENTS

Baptism - Instruction is required for first time parents. Contact Linda for details and scheduling.

Marriage - Arrangements must be made 6 months prior to the wedding date. Contact Linda for details and scheduling.

Visit our Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Website at www.saintfrancisparish.net or Scan the QR code on your device to go directly to the website!





Please remember in your prayers the sick, suffering, and homebound of our parish community, especially those listed below.

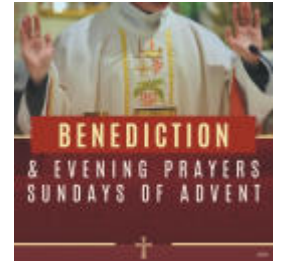
- Ken Orloski
- Baby Willow Lydon
- Marta Riordan
- Maria Heirich
- David Villani
- Gary McLafferty
- Tracey Bierhals
- Edwin Hartman
- Shawn Hartman
- Renee Verostek
- Dennis Geary
- Cookie & Tom Miller
- Tommy McClain
- Bernadette Conerty
- Tom Angert Jr.
- Pat Jordan
- Marek Wabiszewski
- Robert Rakarich
- Rose Hinch
- Marge Karenbauer
- Mary Lou Beilstein
- Bernice Durand
- Elaine Lydon
- Marge Steinhiser
- John Lorenz
- Kathy Miller
- Joe Krall
- Lois Davanzati
- Elizabeth Rakarich
- Agnes Widenhofer
- Carol Rowley
- Dan Jonczak Jr.
- Judy Convery
- Mary Carbin
- Jim Edwards
- C.J. Kriley
- Loretta Schnur
- Janet Biscetlia
- Fr. Victor Kriley, OFM, Cap.
- Fr. Gary Stakem, OFM, Cap

Please call the office or email Jenn to add/remove names from the prayer list.



The Sanctuary Candle at St. Mary this week is In Memory of **Regis & Donna Etzel**

Evening Prayer and Benediction will be held this evening, Sunday, December 19th, at 5:00 PM St. Mary, as we celebrate the last Sunday of Advent. All are welcome to put aside the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and come spend some quiet time with the Lord.



Christmas In Song

Saint Francis Parish invites you to "Journey thru Christmas in Song and Scripture" on Sunday, December 19th, at 3 PM, at St. Joseph Church. Come and be inspired by the joint St. Francis Choirs under the direction of Gerard Conroy and Steven Yealy, with soloists and dramatic readings. There will be a live Nativity under the pergola before and after the concert. Fellowship and Light refreshments will follow. Please join us. If possible, bring a non-perishable food item for the Food Bank.



The Marian Guild will be hosting a Poinsettia Sale at St. John Hall, immediately following the 8:30 am Mass today, December 19th. Cost is \$10 for an 8 inch pot. As always, we thank you for your support!

We just received a letter from the North Pole stating that this year Santa will again be able to participate in our pancake breakfast on Sunday December 19th at St. Joseph Hall, from 8:30 am-1:00 pm. Bring all the little ones to see Santa and receive a gift to take with them! And, enjoy our delicious Pancake Breakfast Buffet.



In addition there will also be a blood drive for those that would like to participate and as a special thanks if you donate blood or plasma, have a "Free" breakfast on us. Now what about that deal! So come on down , enjoy breakfast , visit with Santa , and have a social good Sunday.



Interested in joining the Knights of Columbus – see any of our members for information , you'll be glad you did!

Please note that there will be **no** confession at the regularly scheduled times on Saturday, December 25, 2021 or January 1, 2022.



Volunteers are needed to help with decorating St. John for Christmas. Decorating will take place today, December 19th, immediately following the 8:30 am Mass. If you are able to lend a hand, we would appreciate it!

Christmas Memory Tree - The Bereavement group invites all parishioners from St. Francis to add an ornament/picture to the memory tree at St. Joseph. You can make your ornament and put your loved ones name on it or we can make one for you. You may make as many as you like. This tree is dedicated to those who have gone to their eternal rest over the years. Please place your ornament in the designated basket in the narthex so that we may place it on the tree. Look for the Memory tree when the church is decorated for Christmas. It will be located near the baptismal font. Any questions or help with an ornament, call Teresa Sintz, 724-355-4758



HOPE AND HEALING ARE POSSIBLE!!!

For those struggling with addiction or substance abuse, for their families and for those who have lost loved ones to the disease of addiction and overdose. We come together in prayer! PLEASE JOIN US FOR ROSARY AND SPECIAL INTERCESSIONS **TUESDAYS: Dec 28th - 2:30 to 3:30pm and Dec 21st - 7-8pm**
 ABBA'S HOUSE, 320 W. MAIN ST., SAXONBURG, 16056
information: patomaszewski@zoominternet.net

Parish Giving

**Saint Francis of Assisi Parish
December 4 & 5**

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Offertory at Mass | \$9,641.00 |
| Offertory ONLINE | \$2,940.00 |
| TOTAL Offertory..... | \$12,581.00 |
| Parish Share (PSP) | \$7,009.00 |
| Parish Share ONLINE..... | \$1,050.00 |
| TOTAL Parish Share..... | \$8,059.00 |
| 2021 Parish Share to Date | \$103,145.70 |
| 2021 Parish Share Goal | \$127,706.00 |
| Immaculate Conception | \$103.00 |
| Retired Religious | \$25.00 |
| All Saints | \$4.00 |
| Food Bank..... | \$30.00 |
| Christmas Flowers | \$484.29 |
| Christmas Offering..... | \$100.00 |
| Christmas Charities..... | \$40.00 |
| St. Vincent de Paul | \$10.00 |
| Solemnity of Mary | \$10.00 |

**Thank you for your support
of Parish Ministries!**

Due to the early submission date of the bulletin, the offertory totals for December 11 & 12 will be published in next weekend's bulletin.



knock.

Why Does Jesus Matter?

discovering
CHRIST

an eight week experience

Children's Faith Formation Corner



2021



December 19- CFF **St. Joseph**- 9:15-10:45 AM

CFF **St. John**- 9:45-11 AM

CGS II & III **St Joseph** 6-8PM

Edge- **St. Joseph** 6-8PM

December 26- No CFF and No Edge

Praying for our Families

through the
Intercession of the Holy Family

Families,

No doubt you have heard the saying: “The family that prays together stays together”. This is so true. But we should not be satisfied with merely having our family stay together. We should want more, much more. We should want our families to be holy families, just like the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the family which shows us what God intends the family to be- a community noted for love of God and neighbor. A community of joy, unity and peace.

Beginning in January, we will introduce a way of helping our families to become more like the Holy Family. Each week a prayer card along with a framed picture of the Holy Family will be blessed and presented to three families after Mass. The blessed picture and prayer card should be displayed in a prominent place in the home. Gather together and pray near the picture each day during the week. Meanwhile, a number of our parishioners will be praying rosaries and other prayers for these families all week. We encourage you to continue to pray together to the Holy Family each day even after your week has concluded.

We hope that this practice of family prayer will help our parish families grow in holiness and love of God and neighbor.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Pray for Our Families.



St. Francis of Assisi Evangelization Team



CHRISTMAS PARTY

YOUTH GROUP

Attention all 9-12th graders, come join the youth group Christmas party. Wear your craziest Christmas outfit, pajamas, or ugly sweater. Bring a wrapped gift with just your name on it so we know who it is from. If you are a girl, bring a \$10.00 girl gift and vice versa for a boy. We will play a game to exchange gifts!
5:30-8:00 Sunday, December 19th, St. Mary's Youth room. Come join us for some Christmas fun!



The online version of the
Pittsburgh Catholic
can be found at
www.diopitt.org





Emmy Schaal



Avery Bier

The Nativity
featuring the
Yellow Class at
St. Joseph
Preschool



Abe
Brose
←



AJ
Shwallon
→



Mila Jeffers



Avelynn Brosenitsch

... And the Blue Class



Scarlett Marsh



Mae Brosenitsch



Paige Check



Catherine Norman



Destin McCorkle

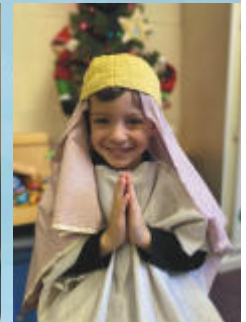


Teagen Felton



Abby Riggle

To The Right →
Joanna Myros, Riser Brosenitsch, and Dom Bracco



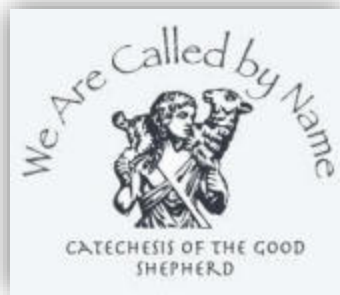
Children's Faith Formation News

December 2021

Growing in Faith... Forming Young Disciples

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (CGS)

CGS is a gift that appeared to our parish over 12 years ago. It is a way of religious formation for children that is quite different from the published programs. It does not use a catechetical series of books or take place in a classroom. In this approach, there is a room prepared for the children in which every object is a help to knowing God. It is a place of simplicity and order, prayer and work, and community. Everything in this room, known as the ATRIUM, is intended to be appropriate to the ages and sizes of the children who are there. It is their religious needs that guide the catechesis. The atrium allows the children to come into contact with Scripture, the liturgy (mass) of the Church, and for the older ones, the whole of sacred history. The qualities most noticeable about the materials in the atrium are their simplicity and their order. Each material has its own place on the Scripture shelf or the liturgical shelf. There are other centers in the room as well---a Baptism area, an altar table, a geography area, a prayer corner. Above all, the room has a certain solemnity. The young child is shown how to walk slowly and speak softly so that, even though everyone is busy and active, an atmosphere of silence permeates the atrium. Catechists (those trained to present and facilitate the child's relationship with God) have observed that the atrium becomes even more important to older children. It is a respite from the pace and pressure of the modern child's life. CGS sessions offer to children of all ages time to listen, work, learn, pray, sing, wonder, rest, and discuss scripture passages. In the silence of the atrium, children make the first discovery that they have an inner life. The program fosters a foundational belief that even the youngest children are already in a relationship with God. The Holy Spirit leads them to meditate and ponder what has been proclaimed from Scripture.



The CGS takes its name from the parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:3-5, 11-16). This parable is basic in the formation of a moral person. One who enjoys a relationship with God, a relationship of deep peace, a real relationship of being in love. The primary goal of CGS is to allow young children to see who God really is and watch Him draw them close as His true followers. When children come to understand and love God early on, they will be equipped with what is necessary to live a spiritually moral life filled with Christian virtues listening to God's calling. CGS has three levels. Level I (ages 3-6), Level II (grades 1-3), Level III (grades 4 - 5 presently, but equipped for 4-7). Our CGS started in the back of the hall with five children. We have grown slowly and carefully resulting in Level I, II, and III for a total of forty-four children!

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (CGS) cont.

CGS is the faith-formation direction of the Catholic Church for many reasons after many years of study. Children under six are now truly “wiser beyond their years” due to everyone and everything they are exposed to long before they enter school. Therefore, the goal and vision of the Catholic Church and CGS is that faith foundation and parish community need to be a larger part of a child’s young life. A child’s growth includes all aspects of body and mind, heart, and spirit. It is important that while we are providing wonderful blessings, advancements and experience to our younger children, a younger relationship with God as well as a true understanding of scripture, liturgy and our Catholic Faith must also be included. This will ensure that the mysterious bond uniting a young innocent child with God will not be compromised by our worldly advancement and super intelligence. The long-term Diocese goal is that consistent CGS instruction will be provided and built-upon for every child from toddler age through their committed adulthood to the Catholic Church. In the months to follow, we will be providing details of each CGS Level. Also, please listen for God’s calling to assist with CGS as a catechist, aid, or helper with classroom materials needed.

Your prayers are welcomed and appreciated as well!



4th Grade Class– St. John Site

St. John’s 4th grade class took the opportunity to share their knowledge with the 1st graders. The 4th graders developed a lesson plan including reading scripture, creating a craft, and playing a fun Saint’s game with the younger students. They were able to lead a lesson focusing on giving thanks to God. Students enjoyed the opportunity to be the “teachers for a day.”



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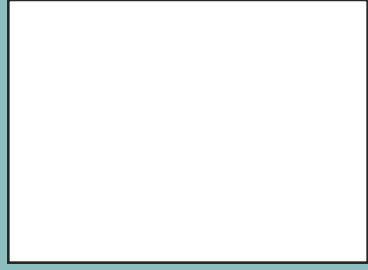
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**CONTACT
CAROLINE KYNE**
724-766-1664 caroline@wlewisins.com



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