

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 30 - January 5

Monday, 12/30	9:00 a.m.	James Hance
Tuesday, 12/31	9:00 a.m.	Ruben Fideldia
	5:00 p.m.	Homebound Parishioners (L)
Wednesday, 1/1	9:30 a.m.	<i>Pro populo</i>
Holy Day	11:15 a.m.	Peggy Layer
Thursday, 1/2	9:00 a.m.	Cynthia Geddes Loveland
Friday, 1/3	9:00 a.m.	Barbara Lynn Beall
	7:30 p.m.	Joe Bernardo
Saturday, 1/4	9:00 a.m.	Evelyn Meade
	5:00 p.m.	<i>Pro populo</i>
Sunday, 1/5	8:00 a.m.	George Polis
	9:30 a.m.	Maria Relunia
	11:15 a.m.	Barbara Cox
	5:00 p.m.	Catherine Sgambati

+ In Memoriam Aeternam +

In your charity, please pray for the repose of the soul of Maria Gancayco, mother of Reverend Richard Gancayco, Chad Finn, brother of Deacon Dan Finn, Theodore Bowers, father of Beverly Bowers.

Please pray for the sick...Alli Campagna, Marge Locke, Maria M. Faria Meade, Zada Stamper, Joan Lutz-Maltz, Mike Mikula, Bob Jones, William Komlo, Margaret Weiss, Joseph Michael Gardner, Tom Breece, Sandra Kimball, Dennis Parnell, Ed Dudenhoefter, Jackie Roebuck King, Jeni Stepanek. *(Names will remain on this list for four consecutive weeks, but can be repeated by calling the Office.)*

Readings for the Week of December 29, 2019

Sunday:	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1]/ Col 3:12-21/Mt 2:13-15, 19-23
Monday:	1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 [11a]/ Lk 2:36-40
Tuesday:	1 Jn 2:18-21/Ps 96:1-2, 11-12, 13 [11a]/ Jn 1:1-18
Wednesday:	Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 [2a]/Gal 4:4-7/ Lk 2:16-21
Thursday:	1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 [3cd]/ Jn 1:19-28
Friday:	1 Jn 2:29-3:6/Ps 98:1, 3cd-4, 5-6 [3cd]/ Jn 1:29-34
Saturday:	1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98:1, 7-8, 9 [3cd]/Jn 1:35-42
Next Sunday:	Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 [cf. 11]/ Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

On December 1, 2019, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter entitled *Admirabile Signum* (“Enchanting Image”) on the meaning and importance of the Nativity Scene. As you read this it is now four days after Christmas. Happily we are still within the Christmas season which will last until January 12 when we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. One of the scenes that Pope Francis recalls in his Apostolic Letter is the origin of the Christmas crèche and the role that St. Francis of Assisi had in its origins. Let’s listen to the Holy Father tell this story:

“But let us go back to the origins of the Christmas crèche so familiar to us. We need to imagine ourselves in the little Italian town of Greccio, near Rieti (a city in Central Italy). Saint Francis stopped there, most likely on his way back from Rome where on 29 November 1223 he had received the confirmation of his Rule from Pope Honorius III. Francis had earlier visited the Holy Land, and the caves in Greccio reminded him of the countryside of Bethlehem. It may also be that the ‘Poor Man of Assisi’ had been struck by the mosaics in the Roman Basilica of Saint Mary Major depicting the birth of Jesus, close to a place where, according to an ancient tradition, the wooden panels of the manger are preserved.

“The Franciscan Sources describe in detail what then took place in Greccio. Fifteen days before Christmas, Francis asked a local man named John to help him realize his desire ‘to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethelhem, to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in the manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he was laid upon a bed of hay’ (Thomas of Celano, *First Life*, 84; *Franciscan Sources*, 469). At this, his faithful friend went immediately to prepare all that the Saint had asked. On 25 December friars came to Greccio from various parts together with people from the farmlands in the area, who brought flowers and torches to light up that night. When Francis arrived, he found a manger full of hay, an ox and a donkey. All those present experienced a new and indescribable joy in the presence of the Christmas scene. The priest then solemnly celebrated the Eucharist over the manger, showing the bond between the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist. At Greccio there were no statues; the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present.

This is how our tradition began: with everyone gathered in joy around the cave, with no distance between the original event and those sharing in its mystery.”

The Holy Father writes in his Apostolic Letter that St. Francis carried out a great work of evangelization with the simplicity of that sign. His teaching touched the hearts of Christians and continues today to offer a simple yet authentic means of portraying the beauty of our faith. He continues his reflection on the lasting significance of what St. Francis first did in Greccio in 1223:

Continued in the column to the right.....

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Is there someone I know who is vulnerable because they have no family to rely on? What can I do for them?

ON JANUARY 5, MASS FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN CELEBRATES PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Mass for All of God's Children, which especially recognizes children and adults with special needs and developmental differences in our communities, will be held at the 5:00 p.m. Youth Mass, on Sunday, January 5, 2019 at our church. St. Francis Special Events Ministry Coordinator Sylvia Jones and her volunteers will host a small reception after the Mass. If you or a person with special needs in your life is interested in serving as a lector, usher, altar server, or Joyful Greeter at the Mass for All of God's People, please contact Sylvia at (301) 762-6564 or by e-mail her at decaffqueen@gmail.com.

**PARISH OFFICES WILL CLOSE
AT 12:00 NOON
ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31
AND WILL BE CLOSED
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1
FOR NEW YEAR**

Happy & Blessed New Year to All!

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

“Setting up the Christmas crèche in our homes helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem. Naturally the Gospels remain our source for understanding and reflecting on that event. At the same time, its portrayal in the crèche helps us to imagine the scene. It touches our hearts and makes us enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real in a broad gamut of historical and cultural contexts.

“In a particular way, from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to ‘feel’ and ‘touch’ the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the Incarnation. Implicitly, it summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty, and self-denial that leads from the manger to Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need (cf. *Mt 25:31-46*).”

Happy New Year!

Until next week,

Fr. John

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 Adoration (January 3) will begin in the Church following the 7:30 p.m. Mass until 9:00 p.m.

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

**Vigil Mass, Tuesday December 31 - 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 1
9:30 & 11:15 a.m.
No 5:00 p.m. Mass**

ONE MORE WEEK TO RETURN YOUR COMMITMENT CARD FOR THE OFFERTORY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Have you been waiting to fill out your Commitment Card for the parish's Offertory Stewardship Appeal program? There's just one more week to return these cards to the offertory basket or the Parish Office, so your contribution can be reflected in our parish's final Summary Report. So far, more than 150 families have returned a Commitment Card; let's shoot for a 100 percent response rate, even if you can't change your offertory contribution for the coming year. Make your giving easy by signing up for our online giving service, Faith Direct, at www.sfadw.org and clicking on 'Give' and 'Online Giving.' For those registered parishioners not currently supporting the church with regular offertory gifts, please consider a monthly gift to support the needs of our parish. If you have any questions, please contact the Parish Office at (301) 840-1407. Thank you!

December 29, 2019

LAMB OF GOD PRAYER MEETING Lamb of God Prayer Group will NOT meet on Tuesday, December 31. For details, please call Pat, (301) 963-9196.

POOR BOX DONATION – The donations for next weekend will go to Gaithersburg Help. *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.

HOLY HOUR FOR THE DYING

On Thursday evenings in the St. Clare's 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.

ROSARY CENACLE OF OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE Cenacle of Our Lady, Queen of Peace to pray for priests and vocations, 2:00 p.m. in the St. Clare's Chapel (Rectory) every Sunday. Please join us.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS - COUNCIL 2323

The Knights of Columbus are looking for new, transferring or readmitted members to share in their Charity, Fraternity, Unity and Patriotism activities. Council 2323 supports many St. Francis activities and has many social events. The KofC offers life and long term care insurance opportunities as well as annuities. A new opportunity: join as an Online Member for \$30 per year; go to www.kofc.org and click on "Join Us". If you wish you can join the Council later. If interested in learning more, contact Gary Palmer (301-948-6494 or email gtdbpalmer@verizon.net).

ROSARY PRAYED IN SPANISH IN THE CHURCH

The Spanish Ministry prays the Rosary in Spanish at 6:30 pm on Tuesdays in the church. Please join us. For more information about the Spanish Ministry, please contact Will Garcia at wagarcia@comcast.net or Lourdes Garcia at legarcia@comcast.net.

TRIENNIAL NATIONAL COLLECTION FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

Next weekend our parish will take up the Collection for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA (AMS). Established by Saint John Paul II in 1985, the AMS is the only US diocese responsible for providing pastoral care to men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, enrolled at a U.S. Military Academy, being treated as a patient at any of the 153 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, or working for the federal government beyond U.S. borders - including those from our own parish and diocese. Including families, AMS priests and deacons serve approximately 1.8 million Catholics who hail from 50 states and U.S. territories. While the salaries and retirement of Catholic military chaplains are paid for by the U.S. Government, the AMS does not receive any funding from the government or military for program and administrative costs. To learn more about AMS, go to www.milarch.org/nationalcollection. Please give generously.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW SMALL GROUP RECOVERING THE FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY

Did you take part in the Gospel of Matthew Small Groups this past fall or did you wish you did? If so, then it's time for the second part of this Bible Study, which will focus on Matthew chapters 17-28. Come join an established Small Group studying the Gospel of Matthew on nearly every day of the week. Most Small Groups will begin meeting the week of January 5, but the start date can be flexible. For more information about the Gospel of Matthew Small Groups, please contact Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick at abosnick@sfadw.org. Small Group members who took part in the fall session can also just contact their Small Group leader or facilitator to convey their interest.

As a heads up, all parishioners are also invited to celebrate Sunday of the Word of God on January 25/26, 2020. After the 11:15 am Mass on Sunday, January 26, the Small Groups Committee will host a "Stay for 30" gathering, during which participants will get introduced to a passage in the Gospel of Matthew, watch a video segment on the passage and discuss it in the context of Sunday of the Word of God. The gathering might particularly resonate with Gospel of Matthew Small Group participants, who have spent several weeks delving into these Gospel readings.

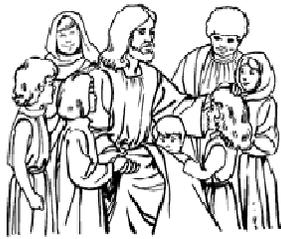
REBUILDING COORDINATOR NEEDED

Are you organized, adept at fixing things and passionate about serving others? If so, then please pray over serving as our parish's Rebuilding Together coordinator, who organizes volunteers to help repair and provide light renovations of a home owned by persons of need in Montgomery County. Parishioners Mike Rogewitz and John Vilgos have given years of service as coordinator but can no longer serve in that capacity. Can you? The actual RT day is April 25, and the coordinator must be onsite for that. But there is also pre-planning and organization that occurs as the day approaches. The qualified coordinator would have engineering and/or building knowledge, patience and can go with the flow. Rebuilding Together provides training. If we are unable to identify a volunteer coordinator, then St. Francis will have to forgo the offsite home project but will coordinate a workday on the parish grounds. For more information, contact Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick at abosnick@sfadw.org.

COME SWING WITH THE OLNEY BIG BAND ON JANUARY 18

As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family this weekend, keep your eyes peeled for a family-friendly event coming up Saturday, January 18, in the church. The Olney Big Band will be performing at the Haiti Benefit Concert at 7:30 pm January 18. This traditional jazz big band specializes in classic swing, jazz and dance music from the Big Band Era of the 30s and 40s and arrangements from the 50s to present day. Bring your whole family and introduce a swinging, upbeat genre of music to your children and grandchildren. The concert is free, but any donations will benefit the Haiti Medical Mission in St. Francis of Assisi's sister parish in Léon, Haiti. Please plan to stay for a post-concert reception, featuring light hors d'oeuvres and desserts, in the Gathering Space. For more information, please contact Director of Music Ministry Janet Pate at sfadwmusic@gmail.com.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS/EVENTS



RE CLASS SCHEDULE AND THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

There are NO Religious Education classes on the following days:

Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, December 29, 30 & 31.

Religious Education classes will resume on January 5, 6 and 7.

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREP DAY SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

Children preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time will attend a day of preparation on Saturday, January 4 from 9:00 am - 12:30 pm in the Parish Center (Snow date: January 11). Please pray for these children who will receive this Sacrament on Saturday, January 18.

CATECHISTS AND AIDES NEEDED

Additional volunteers are needed for our Monday afternoon Elementary program and for our Sunday Special Needs Catechesis class. Please consider whether you can serve as a catechist or classroom aide for our children and young people. To learn more about this important ministry, please contact Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

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 website and 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.

To The Parish Community of St. Francis of Assisi:

The love and support that you gave the Little Sisters of the Poor was a sign of your genuine Charity. The collection amounted to **\$5,766.49**. Your gifts are truly a sign of God's loving and caring Providence, which will help us provide the best possible care for many elderly in need who come to make their Home with us. Thank you all! Our Residents join with us in promising you our daily prayers for all your many intentions. God Bless each and everyone of you!

*~ The Little Sisters of the Poor & Residents of the
Jeanne Jugan Residence, Washington DC*

YOUTH MINISTRY

Dear Parents/Teens,

Merry Christmas! This week in the bulletin, we have our featured Spring 2020 events. We begin with First Saturday Mass & Brunch on Saturday, January 4th, 2020. If you would like a copy of the 2020 Calendar or you would like to make a meal for our youth group meeting, please email me at sfayouth@sfadw.org. Please also share with your teen that these events will also be on Instagram.

- Saturday, January 04, 2020 First Saturday Mass & Brunch 9-11AM (St. John Neuman Parish Meet in the Church & Pick Up from the Neuman House)
 - Saturday, January 04, 2020- Sunday, January 05, 2020 Youth Group Fundraiser After All Masses (Gathering Space)
 - Sunday, January 05, 2020 Youth Group Meeting 6:15-8PM (Meet in the Gathering Space)
 - Monday, January 06, 2020 Faith in Action 4:30-6:30PM (Meet in the Gathering Space)
 - Monday, January 06, 2020 Faith & Finances for Teens 4:30-6:30PM (Meet in the Gathering Space)
- Happy New Year!

*God bless you,
Sarah Seyed-Ali*

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School *We are...St. Jude* www.StJudeRockville.org

SJRCS RE-ENROLLMENT

The re-enrollment period is upon us! Register for the 2020-2021 school year. School families can enroll now through December 31. On January 1st the admissions window will open for everyone. Enrollment: [TADS: Online Registration and Enrollment](#)
Tuition Incentive Program: [Receive \\$750 off your tuition bill for every family you refer \(and enrolls\) at SJRCS!](#)

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

Join us January 31, 2020 as we celebrate the rich culture and worldwide traditions that make St. Jude such a special place. We need you to help make this event a success! We are asking volunteers to set up booths that represent the country you come from with food and items from that country. Contact Ms. Balog at Katharine.Balog@StJudeRockville.org to help.

PLEASE JOIN US MARCH 21, 2020 AT 6:00 PM

All proceeds support our goal for an
ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY LAB
*Silent Auction * Raffles * Live Auction*
*Buffet Dinner * Online and Mobile Bidding * Dancing*
Featuring Live Band: [DOCTORS ORDERS](#)
Casual Dress

(Come wearing your favorite denim and diamonds!)

Buy Your Jeep Renegade Raffle Ticket online TODAY!

\$50 per ticket and only 500 tickets will be sold

[https://sosj.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/DenimandDiamonds/
tabid/1098759/Default.aspx](https://sosj.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/DenimandDiamonds/tabid/1098759/Default.aspx)

MARRIAGE IS YOUR VOCATION - START LIVING IT

You can have a deep spiritual life in communion with your spouse and Christ - come discover Teams of Our Lady, a Roman Catholic married lay movement that helps you structure and grow your conjugal spiritual life. We will hold an information session on Saturday, January 4, at 1:00 pm at St. John Neumann Church, in the Neumann House (across the street from the church). For more information or to RSVP please contact Mary Singleton, mpksingleton@yahoo.com.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CONVOCATION ON ENGAGEMENT ACROSS GENERATIONS

Please join us for an intergenerational convocation at the Montgomery County Executive Office Building Auditorium, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville on March 21st, 2020 from 8:15 am - 1:00 pm. All parishioners are invited as the Justice and Advocacy Commission and Catholic Charities welcome you to a discussion of how we can better address the needs of all members of the county, particularly through our parishes, schools, and senior living facilities to inform parishes about the benefits of engagement across generations. For more information or to RSVP, contact leah@empoweringtheages.org or call (301) 476-0186.

FOR SINGLE CATHOLICS 22ND ANNUAL EPIPHANY PARTY

St. Raphael Church, 1513 Dunster Road, Rockville, Saturday, January 11 starting at 7:00 p.m. Includes delicious Greek dinner, salsa dance lessons, complementary drinks, DJ and more. Send \$21 check donation by January 3 to SCS Epiphany Part, St. Raphael, 1590 Kimblewick Road, Rockville MD 20854 or \$27 cash, credit card or check at the door. For more info please call 240-426-5589.

EXODUS 90

Are you looking for a more ascetic life? Do you want to make Jesus your first priority and the ruler of your life? Do you have many distractions and attachments that take precious time away from God and Family? Visit exodus90.com and see if you would like to be part of St. Francis' challenging Exodus 90 group starting this January 13. If interested, contact Alvaro Calabria at alvaroc@takomaparkmd.gov (Exodus 90 as the subject); 301-785-8843; or talk with Fr. John after Mass or you can e-mail him at jdillon@sfadw.org.

HELP FOR MARRIAGES IN TROUBLE

Is your marriage going down the right road or is it a little off track? Looking for a better way? The Retrouvaille Program is for married couples facing difficult challenges in their relationship. It is a Christian marriage program, Catholic in origin, in which couples of all faiths or no faith background are encouraged to attend. It can help you learn the tools of healthy communication, build intimacy, and heal. For confidential information about or to register for the weekend on 24-26 January 2020, please visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org, call 443-400-7017, or e-mail: 3015@retrouvaille.org. There is hope!

AMAZONSMILE ENABLES ST. FRANCIS TO INCREASE FUNDRAISING THROUGH ONLINE SHOPPING

St. Francis parishioners can support our church whenever they're shopping online at Amazon.com. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church recently became a recipient of AmazonSmile, which enables the church to receive 0.5 percent of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases you make. Go to our Home Page to start shopping!

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

FORMED

THE CATHOLIC FAITH ON DEMAND

The best Catholic content. All in one place. It's EASY and FREE to Register!

- 1) Go to sfadw.formed.org
- 2) Click "Register" and enter your name, email address, and desired password
- 3) You're all ready to access the inspiring and Engaging content on FORMED!
- 4) Enjoy and share with others in our local community!

FORMED is available 24/7 for you to grow in your faith. St. Francis has purchased this gift for parish use.

YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE ABUSED

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of violent and coercive behavior by one adult over another in an intimate relationship. It can consist of repeated severe beatings or subtle forms of abuse, including threats and control. If you experience any form of abuse, please know that there is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. To learn more about domestic violence, please visit www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace.

2019 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

To receive credit in 2019, your contributions must be dated December 31, 2019. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be received in the parish Office on or before Thursday, January 2, 2020. As a reminder, the parish statement of contributions will not include your FAITHDIRECT contributions. You will receive a statement directly from FAITHDIRECT.