

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 21 - December 27

Monday, 12/21	9:00 a.m.	Tony Kalekerinos (L)
Tuesday, 12/22	9:00 a.m.	Jane Lakebrink
Wednesday, 12/23	9:00 a.m.	Benicio Huaman
	7:30 p.m.	Tom Mason
Thursday, 12/24	4:00 p.m.	For Our Priests' Intentions
	8:00 p.m.	For Our Priests' Intentions
Friday, 12/25	8:00 a.m.	Marie & James Galvin
	9:30 a.m.	Don Smith
	11:15 a.m.	<i>Pro populo</i>
Saturday, 12/26	5:00 p.m.	Theodore Joseph Gregg
Sunday, 12/27	8:00 a.m.	<i>Pro populo</i>
	9:30 a.m.	RE Catechists & Families (L)
	11:15 a.m.	Rita Arias

Mass Intentions will be prayed for in a private daily Mass said by Fr. John if not prayed for in a public Mass.

+ In Memoriam Aeternam +

In your charity, please pray for the repose of the soul of Tom Boyle, husband of Lorelei Boyle, Deacon Raymond L. Chaput, Archdiocese of Washington.

Please pray for the sick... Mary Cutting, Angelica Santos, Jackie Komlo, Allison Brauer, John McCormick, Frank Knorr, Allan Degen, Bob Jones, William Komlo, Joseph Michael Gardner, 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 20, 2020

Sunday:	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 [2a]/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38
Monday:	Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 [1a; 3a]/Lk 1:39-45
Tuesday:	1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/ Lk 1:46-56
Wednesday:	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14 [cf. Lk 21:28]/Lk 1:57-66
Thursday:	Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 [2]/Lk 1:67-79
Friday:	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
Saturday:	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 [6]/Mt 10:17-22
Next Sunday:	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Ps 128:1- 2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1] or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 [7a, 8a]/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

We have experienced many disappointments during this time of pandemic. One of them was that Saint Nicholas had to cancel his customary visit to our parish on the Sunday, December 6, the Second Sunday of Advent and his actual feast day. Perhaps because Saint Nicholas (known by some by the nickname Santa Claus) had to cancel his travel plans this year, some of the children of the parish might be asking the question that Virginia O'Hanlon asked the editor of a New York newspaper many years ago. In anticipation of Christmas, which we will celebrate on this coming Friday, I want to print what is probably the most reprinted editorial in any newspaper in the English language. In 1897, the New York Sun received a letter to the Editor from Virginia O'Hanlon, who was eight years old and a resident of New York City. Her letter was only a four sentences long:

Dear Editor:

I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says: "If you see it in THE SUN it's so. Please tell me the truth: is there a Santa Claus?" Virginia O'Hanlon. 115 West Ninety-Fifth Street.

Francis Pharellus Church was the editor of THE SUN who was assigned to answer little Virginia's letter. Church had served as a war correspondent during the American Civil War, a time that saw a great deal of suffering and lack of hope and faith in much of society. He saw in Virginia's letter (for which she may have had some help in composition from her father, Dr. Philip O'Hanlon) an opportunity to address this. Let's enjoy reading this wonderful piece as we wait for Christmas day.

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exists, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would the world be if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and delight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to watch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's not proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

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

Second Sunday in Advent

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How do I bear witness to my faith? How can the world see that the Lord is with me?

ADVENT ACTIVITIES

During this Advent season, St. Francis parishioners are invited to take part in prayer, penance and preparatory sacrifices, as we anticipate celebrating the birth of our Lord and his return to us as our Redeemer and Savior. We invite you join in the following event happening this Advent:

Digital Advent Mission: *December 20 from 8-9 pm.* Join a multi-part online mission, titled, "The Fulfillment of All Desires," led by Catholic thought leader and author Ralph Martin. The event is free and registration is required at www.renewalministries.net/advent-mission.

COMMUNION SERVICE SUNDAYS - 1:30-2:00 PM

Fr. John offers Holy Communion from 1:30-2:00 pm in front of the church or in the Gathering Space depending on the weather to parishioners who are unable to receive the Eucharist during in-person Mass. Attendees should park their cars, put on a face mask and line up, maintaining six feet of distance between households or unrelated parties; please note that there may be two lines of people receiving Holy Communion

THANK YOU TO THOSE PARISHIONERS WHO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE PARISH DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES. WE APPRECIATE ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO!!

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all read? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank GOD! He lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Merry Christmas to all!

Until next week,
Fr. John Dillon

PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen



CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

4 pm and 8 pm in the Church. A virtual Christmas Mass will also premiere at 6 pm on Christmas Eve on the parish YouTube Channel and can be viewed as a recording thereafter.

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

9 am and 12 pm in the Church.

For a complete list of Advent events and liturgies, please go to <https://www.sfadw.org/advent-christmas>.

SIGN-UP FOR THE IN-PERSON MASSES ON CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY OPENED AT 12:00 NOON ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, ON FLOCKNOTE.

VIRTUAL HAITI BENEFIT CONCERT EXTENDS MUSIC, MISSION TO ONLINE AUDIENCE

On November 21, the parish Music Ministry presented a virtual Haiti Benefit Concert featuring Stephen Czarkowski on the cello and Director of Music Ministry Janet Pate on the piano that premiered on the parish YouTube Channel. The 34-minute concert features performances from composers J.S. Bach, Johannes Brahms, Camille Saint-Saëns and Astor Pizzolla; it also offers heartfelt testimonials on the Haiti Ministry from Haiti Ministry Coordinator Dan Cardile, Pere Pierre Jeanot from our sister parish in Haiti, and parishioners and Haitian natives Ketlard Boursiquot and Mona Kernisan. The virtual concert is still available in its entirety on our parish YouTube Channel at <https://youtu.be/6rhzQA-mrHY> through **Monday, December 21**. Please watch the concert, listen to some beautiful performances and consider supporting our Haiti Ministry, which includes the Haiti Medical Mission, the Bon Pasteur School and the Just Haiti Coffee initiative. Thank you to all the generous donors who have supported our Haiti Ministry through the concert!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

- Today, Sunday, December 20, all religious education students and parents are invited to share in our 11 am Online Family Event Christmas celebration. The link to join will be shared with registered families by Flocknote, and a resource packet for this event is also being sent by U.S. Mail.
- As noted on the Unit 2 checklist provided to all registered families by US mail, students are scheduled to complete lessons in their textbooks as follows:
 - week of December 20: Session 8
 - week of December 27: Christmas lesson/Session 15
- Our next online parent meeting introducing the themes of Unit 3 will be held at 11 am on Sunday, January 10. The link for this Zoom meeting will be sent to registered families, and a recorded version will also be made available. Families will also be receiving Unit 3 materials around this time.

Spotlight on St. Jude Regional Catholic School

We are...St. Jude

www.StJudeRockville.org

<http://www.facebook.com/stjuderockvillemd>

Instagram: [stjuderockville](https://www.instagram.com/stjuderockville)

Twitter: [@StJudeRCS](https://twitter.com/StJudeRCS)

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The faculty and staff of St. Jude Regional Catholic School wish you and your family a very blessed Christmas and a faith filled New Year. SJRCS is closed for the Christmas holiday from December 21st through January 4th.

SJRCS RE-ENROLLMENT

The re-enrollment period is open! School families can enroll now through December 31. Space is limited in several classes so register now! To register for the 2021-2022 school year go to : [TADS: Online Registration and Enrollment](#). On January 1st the admissions window will open for everyone.

2020 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

To receive credit in 2020, your contributions must be dated December 31, 2020. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be received in the parish Office on or before Saturday, January 2, 2021. As a reminder, the parish statement of contributions will not include your FAITHDIRECT contributions. You will receive a statement directly from FAITHDIRECT.

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Thanks for giving! "We are conscious of the great generosity of the many benefactors who support the Retirement Fund for Religious each year," says a Catholic sister. "Support from the fund has been a tremendous blessing to our retired sisters." Thank you for donating to last week's second collection.

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.

FAITH DIRECT - ONLINE GIVING

I want to invite you in joining me and many others at St. Francis of Assisi in setting up recurring eGiving through Faith Direct. Thanks to eGiving, your weekly offertory will be automatically taken care of, which saves you time and saves our parish money by eliminating all those unused offertory envelopes. To sign up for electronic contributions visit www.faithdirect.net. The code for St. Francis is MD110 or text the word ENROLL to 301-804-2584. I want to thank you for your continued support of our parish family especially during these trying times. God Bless You, *Fr. John*

ENCOURAGE MINISTRY

EnCourage is a ministry dedicated to the spiritual needs of parents, siblings, children, and other relatives and friends of persons who have same-sex attractions. Standing by the true teaching of the Catholic Church, EnCourage members support one another and their loved ones through discussion, prayer, and fellowship. Please contact Fr. John for more information at 301-840-1407 or email him at jdillon@sfadw.org.

TEAMS OF OUR LADY

Teams of Our Lady is a movement of Christian Marriage Spirituality that brings together couples united by the Sacrament of Matrimony and who wish, together, to deepen the graces of their Sacrament. It offers married couples a pathway toward love, happiness, and holiness. The movement's aim is to help couples live fully their Sacrament of Marriage. Interested in learning more, contact Fr. John at 301-840-1407 or email him at jdillon@sfadw.org.

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*Merry Christmas
from Fr. John. Fr. William
& the Parish Staff!*