



Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent December 20, 2020

*Saint Francis of Assisi Parish
Missions of Our Lady of the Valley in Fall River Mills
and Saint Stephen's in Bieber*

Mission Statement

We, the Catholic Church of Saint Francis, are a community of faith called by Baptism to center our lives in the sacraments and the Holy Eucharist. We gather together to mutually grow in our love for God and neighbor by studying the Word of God; by believing in the Faith and Traditions from the Apostles; by accepting the teachings of the Magisterium and by receiving and giving support, hope, faith and charity.

*Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís
Misiones de Nuestra Señora del Valle en Fall River Mills
y San Esteban en Bieber*

Nuestra Misión

Nosotros la Iglesia de San Francisco, somos una comunidad de Fe llamados por el Bautismo a centrar nuestra vida en los sacramentos y la Santa Eucaristía. Nosotros nos reunimos para crecer mutuamente en nuestro amor a Dios y a nuestro semejante a través de estudiar la Palabra de Dios; a través de creer en la Fe y Tradición de los Apóstoles; a través de aceptar las enseñanzas del Magisterio y a través de recibir y dar Apoyo, Fe, Esperanza y Caridad.

Rev. Apolonio C. Catada

Parochial Administrator

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

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MISSIONS

Our Lady of the Valley 43434 Hwy. 299E Fall River Mills	St. Stephen's 201 Hwy. 299E Bieber
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MASS SCHEDULE

See "Parish Calendar" (opposite) for changes.

Weekends

Saturday	4:30 pm	Our Lady of the Valley
Sunday	9:00 am	St. Francis
	11:00 am	Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)
	1:00 pm	St. Stephen's
	4:30 pm	Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)

Weekdays

Mon, Tue, Fri	9:00 am	St. Francis
Thursday	6:00 pm	St. Francis (Spanish)
Friday	6:00 pm	Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)

ADORATION

1st Friday	9:30 am—Noon	St. Francis
1st Saturday	3:30 pm	Our Lady of the Valley
1st Sunday	11:45 am	St. Stephen's
Thursday's	3—6 pm	St. Francis
Friday's	11 am—6 pm	Our Lady of the Valley

First Sunday of the Month: All the Masses are said for the sick and, following Mass, Anointing of the Sick will be administered.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Confession is available one-half hour before scheduled Masses. Otherwise, call the parish for an appointment.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL FOOD BANK

Food is available on request. Call the parish at 335-2372 for food anytime you are in need or call Bob Gartner at 249-8641.

NEW PARISHIONERS

Please register at our website [@stfrancisburney.org](http://stfrancisburney.org)

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN (CCD)

Please contact Josefa Johnston (294-5290) or Elaine Shields (336-1003) or Estella Valdovinos (524-6434) Spanish

MUSIC: WEDDINGS & FUNERALS

Please contact Joan Knapp (530) 294-1234

BECOMING CATHOLIC (RCIA)

Program of study for non-Catholic adults or Catholics seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation. Contact David Wanat at 335-2941 or email: convoyb@gmail.com

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact Bob Gartner 249-8641

MINISTERS

St. Francis	December 20	December 27
Lectors:	Kathy Billo	Bob Gartner
	Bob Gartner	Tom Weber
Ex. Min. of Holy Communion:		

CALENDAR

Thu	12/24	Christmas Eve Vigil Mass 4:30 PM Our Lady of the Valley
Fri	12/25	Christmas Day Mass 9:00 AM St. Francis Mass 11:00 AM (Spanish) Our Lady of the Valley Mass 1:00 PM St. Stephens
Thu	12/31	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Vigil Mass 4:30 PM Our Lady of the Valley
Fri	1/1	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass 9:00 AM St. Francis Mass 11:00 AM (Spanish) Our Lady of the Valley Mass 1:00 PM St. Stephens

For more information see our website at www.stfrancisburney.org

Financial Report

July 1 to October 31, 2020

	This Year	Last Year	Difference	%
Collections	33,994.10	39,601.16	-5,607.06	-14.2%
Total Income	39,551.15	45,258.16	-5,707.01	-12.6%
Total Expense	-44,901.72	-47,774.84	-2,873.12	-6.0%
Surplus (-Defecit)	-5,350.57	-2,516.68		

Reflection

God wills to dwell with us, and in us. Jesus, the Word of God, finds a perfect dwelling place in the Heart of Mary, and becomes flesh in her womb by the power of the Spirit. Let us open our hearts in faith to Jesus, who comes to us through Mary.

Hospitality at St. Stephen's

Every Sunday is hospitality Sunday at St. Stephen's. Please join us for a nice lunch with soup/casserole, salad, bread, dessert and drinks. All are welcome, bring something to share if you can.

**Reflection on the Gospel.
From *Marialis Cultus* by St. Paul VI (1974)**

17. Mary is the attentive Virgin, who receives the word of God with faith, that faith which in her case was the gateway and path to divine motherhood, for, as Saint Augustine realized, “Blessed Mary by believing conceived Him (Jesus) whom believing she brought forth.” In fact, when she received from the angel the answer to her doubt (cf. Lk. 1:34–37), “full of faith, and conceiving Christ in her mind before conceiving Him in her womb, she said, ‘I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me’ (Lk. 1:38).” It was faith that was for her the cause of blessedness and certainty in the fulfillment of the promise: “Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled” (Lk. 1:45). Similarly, it was faith with which she, who played a part in the Incarnation and was a unique witness to it, thinking back on the events of the infancy of Christ, meditated upon these events in her heart (cf. Lk. 2:19, 51). The Church also acts in this way, especially in the liturgy, when with faith she listens, accepts, proclaims and venerates the word of God, distributes it to the faithful as the bread of life and in the light of that word examines the signs of the times and interprets and lives the events of history.

18. Mary is also the Virgin in prayer. She appears as such in the visit to the mother of the precursor, when she pours out her soul in expressions glorifying God, and expressions of humility, faith and hope. This prayer is the Magnificat (cf. Lk. 1:46–55), Mary’s prayer par excellence, the song of the messianic times in which there mingles the joy of the ancient and the new Israel. As St. Irenaeus seems to suggest, it is in Mary’s canticle that there was heard once more the rejoicing of Abraham who foresaw the Messiah (cf. Jn. 8:56) and there rang out in prophetic anticipation the voice of the Church: “In her exultation Mary prophetically declared in the name of the Church: ‘My soul proclaims the glory of the Lord...’” And in fact Mary’s hymn has spread far and wide and has become the prayer of the whole Church in all ages.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

St. Francis

Ray Wanat, Nancy Longacre, Irma Welty, Melba Facey,
Christina Mora, Glenda Pearson & Barbara, Bob Heisinger

Our Lady of the Valley

Rick Phay, Eva Rebay, Gary Freeland

St. Stephen’s

Olivia Cox, Ryan Graham, Vernon Ferreira,
Trish Bautista, Nancy Fenner, Liz Paul, Breen Hofmann,
Carl & Mary Doyle, Carol Mitchell

**Statement of Bishop Jaime Soto on the Threatening
Surge of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The frustration aches deep down as Christmas approaches while we remain unable to gather in our churches and celebrate the coming of Christ as we have in every other year. I share the pain this causes for all of us.

Everyone wants to celebrate Mass indoors this Christmas. Every one of us wishes we could gather our families as we have for generations, hug our grandparents and grandchildren, and celebrate this holy time.

We simply cannot wish away the reality that the virus is surging in the state and throughout our communities. We cannot ignore the growing number of family and friends who are afflicted. Our hospitals are at risk of being overwhelmed. The compassionate mercy of God calls every one of us to do our part and make sacrifices to protect the old, the sick and the vulnerable.

This Christmas we reverence the Lord Jesus who took upon himself the human condition by exercising the prudent and necessary disciplines that will stem the spread of this virus, protecting our family, friends and neighbors. This year, each of us can be a sacramental work of Christ’s mercy by wearing a mask, keeping physical distance, attending Mass outdoors or online, and praying for those who are threatened by the virus as well as those who protect us from infection.

Mary and Joseph could not find in Bethlehem a place to receive and worship the Christ child. Still, they persevered, trusting in God’s merciful providence. To this day, Christians follow the shepherds to find the King of Kings humbly huddled in a manger. Let not our disappointments keep us from finding him again amidst the unexpected tribulations of this Pandemic.

Every Advent we pray, “Come Lord Jesus” knowing not when and how He will come to us. With patience and humility may we find His tender mercy in the way we reverently safeguard one another during these trying times.

May the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary join with our prayers for God’s mercy to end the pandemic, bring healing to the afflicted, protection and perseverance to those who care for them.

Respectfully,
+Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento

**From the Audience of Pope Francis
(December 16, 2020)**

Those who pray never turn their backs on the world. If prayer does not gather the joys and sorrows, the hopes and the anxieties of humanity, it becomes a “decorative” activity, a superficial, theatrical, solitary way of behaving. We all need interiority: to retreat within a space and a time dedicated to our relationship with God. But this does not mean that we evade reality. In prayer, God “takes us, blesses us, then breaks us and gives us”, to satisfy everyone’s hunger. Every Christian is called to become in God’s hands bread, broken and shared. That is, it is concrete prayer, that is not an escape.

Prayer comes from our hearts and our voices and gives heart and voice to so many people do not know how to pray or who do not want to pray or for whom it is impossible to pray: we are the heart and the voice of these people, rising to Jesus, rising to the Father as intercessors. In the solitude of those who pray, whether the solitude lasts a long time or only a half-hour, to pray, those who pray separate themselves from everything and from everyone to find everything and everyone in God. These people pray for the whole world, bearing its sorrows and sins on their shoulders. They pray for each and every person: they are like God’s “antennas” in this world. The one who prays sees the face of Christ in every poor person who knocks at the door, in every person who has lost the meaning of things.

The human heart tends toward prayer. It is simply human. Those who do not love their brother or sister do not pray seriously. Someone might say: one cannot pray when steeped in hatred; one cannot pray when steeped in indifference. Prayer is offered only in the spirit of love. Those who do not love pretend to pray, they believe they are praying, but they are not praying because they lack the proper spirit, which is love. In the Church, those who are familiar with the sadness and joy of others dig deeper than those who investigate the world’s “chief systems”. Because of this, human experience is present in every prayer, because no matter what mistakes people may have committed, they should never be rejected or set aside.

The Good Shepherd remains faithful even before the awareness of the sin of His own people: the Good Shepherd continues to be a Father even when His children distance themselves and abandon Him. He perseveres in His service as shepherd even with those who have bloodied His hands; He does not close His heart to those who have even made Him suffer.

The Church, in all of her members, has the mission to practice the prayer of intercession: to intercede for others. This is especially so for those who exercise roles of responsibility: parents, teachers, ordained ministers, superiors of communities... Like Abraham and Moses, they must at times “defend” the people entrusted to them before God. In reality, we are talking about protecting them with God’s eyes and heart, with His same invincible compassion and tenderness. Pray with tenderness for others.

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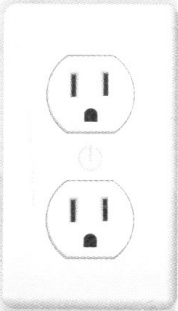
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*We Bill All Insurances

"We provide personalized care, and have had the pleasure of improving the quality of life of people in the valley for 18 years."

