The First Sunday of Advent

Mass Intention

SUNDAY, December 3 – First Sunday of Advent
8:00 A.M. Darrin O'Connor (Hili)
9:30 A.M. For the People of St. Francis
11:00 A.M. Joseph Spiteri
12:30 P.M. Rino Del Carro
Walter Malecky
Laura Maffei

MONDAY, December 4– Saint John Damascene
9:00 A.M. Rocco Vlakanck

TUESDAY, December 5–Weekday
9:00 A.M. Eileen Flynn

WEDNESDAY, December 6– Saint Nicholas
9:00A.M. Bridget Sullivan

THURSDAY, December 7– Saint Ambrose
9:00 A.M. Maria Messina

FRIDAY, December 8 – Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
9:00 A.M. The Teklits Family
11:00A.M. Florence Drob
7:30P.M. Raymond Loud

SATURDAY, December 9– Weekday
9:00 A.M. Purgatorial Society
Louis Antonelli
Dariusz Jan Matras
Nick Ciavarra Sr.
Elsie Ciavarra

5:00P.M. Lucia Borgia

SUNDAY, December 10– Second Sunday of Avent
8:00 A.M. Holy Name
9:30 A.M. Marko Muskardin
11:00 A.M. For the People of St. Francis
12:30 P.M. Rino Del Carro
Antonina Kos
Concetta Trentini
Giuseppe Carlino
Salvatore Carmela Marino
Augustino Marino

Today's Readings

The First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b, 64:2-7
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:33-37

Readings for the Week

MONDAY: Isaiah 2:1-5
Matthew 8:5-11

TUESDAY: Isaiah 11:1-10
Luke 10:21-24

WEDNESDAY Isaiah 25:6-10a
Matthew 15:29-37

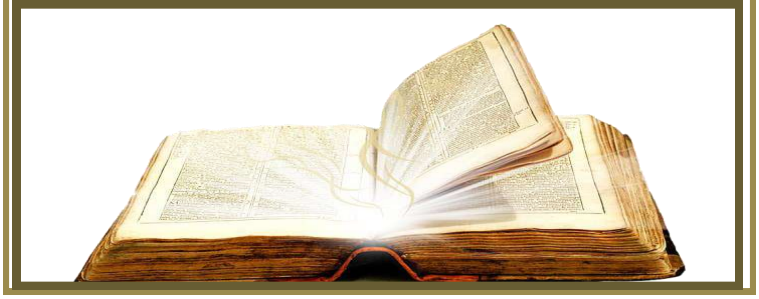
THURSDAY: Isaiah 26:1-6
Matthew 7:21, 24-27

FRIDAY: Genesis 3:9-15, 20
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12
Luke 1:26-38

SATURDAY: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26
Matthew 9:35--10:1, 5a, 6-8

The Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-8



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Dear Parishioners,

Today begins the Advent Season and a new liturgical year. Our Sunday readings will come from Cycle B and our weekday readings will be from Year II. Throughout the liturgical year we are led through the mysteries of the life of Jesus. Imagine a spiral to help us visualize the liturgical year. During the year each Sunday moves us around the circle of the spiral until we come full circle and begin again with a new year. But each new year moves us up a level on the spiral so that we do not repeat the same circle. We will revisit the mysteries of Jesus, but from different perspectives.

Today we celebrate the mystery of God's promise of salvation fulfilled in Christ. Advent is a time of waiting until salvation promised will be ours when Christ comes again in glory.

God's promise of salvation was integral to the life of the Israelites as seen in today's first reading. We hear the prophet Isaiah saying that Israel failed once again to keep their part of the covenant with God. Isaiah cries out to God to come and once again save his people because they have sinned. Throughout the history of Israel, God remained faithful to his promises while the Israelites failed time after time. All we have to do is substitute us for the Israelites in order to see that we are just as susceptible to sinning against God as they were. The good news is that God is just as faithful to us as to the Israelites.

In our second reading, Paul gives thanks to God for the gifts bestowed on the Thessalonians; gifts of speech and knowledge, as well as spiritual gifts. He reminds the Thessalonians that Jesus will strengthen them to the very end with all that they need. In this way they will be blameless on the Day of Judgment. As they await the return of the Savior they will be made stronger. Paul is also speaking to us as we begin our Advent season of waiting, telling us that as we prepare for the coming of Christ, our needs also will be met. Knowing of God's faithfulness with the Israelites and the Thessalonians, we have faith in what Paul tells us.

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation. In our gospel reading Jesus continued to carry out God's plan of salvation by teaching his disciples about the importance of being prepared with these descriptive warnings: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come." Jesus realized that human nature was weak and prone to failure. It is very easy to be caught off guard and Jesus knew this. That is why he was so insistent that the disciples be ready for the Master's return. Jesus understands our human weakness and calls us to himself to receive forgiveness, grace, and strength as we await his coming.

All God's Blessings,
Msgr. Maresca

Friday, December 8, 2023
The Feast of
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

PRAYER TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, did prepare a worthy dwelling place for your Son, we beseech you that, as by the foreseen death of this, Your Son, You did preserve Her from all stain, so too You would permit us, purified through Her intercession, to come unto You. Through the same Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, world without end. Amen.

Join Us for Mass at St. Francis of Assisi
9:00AM, 11:00AM
and 7:30PM

Sunday, December 3, 2023
The Feast of
Saint Francis Xavier

Jesus asked, “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Matthew 16:26a). The words were repeated to a young teacher of philosophy who had a highly promising career in academics, with success and a life of prestige and honor before him. Francis Xavier, 24 at the time, and living and teaching in Paris, did not heed these words at once. They came from a good friend, Ignatius of Loyola, whose tireless persuasion finally won the young man to Christ. Francis then made the spiritual exercises under the direction of Ignatius, and in 1534, joined his little community, the infant Society of Jesus. Together at Montmartre they vowed poverty, chastity, obedience, and apostolic service according to the directions of the pope. From Venice, where he was ordained a priest in 1537, Xavier went on to Lisbon and from there sailed to the East Indies, landing at Goa, on the west coast of India. For the next 10 years he labored to bring the faith to such widely scattered peoples as the Hindus, the Malayans, and the Japanese. He spent much of that time in India, and served as provincial of the newly established Jesuit province of India. Wherever he went, Xavier lived with the poorest people, sharing their food and rough accommodations. He spent countless hours ministering to the sick and the poor, particularly to lepers. Very often he had no time to sleep or even to say his breviary but, as we know from his letters, he was filled always with joy. Xavier went through the islands of Malaysia, then up to Japan. He learned enough Japanese to preach to simple folk, to instruct, and to baptize, and to establish missions for those who were to follow him. From Japan he had dreams of going to China, but this plan was never realized. Before reaching the mainland, he died. His remains are enshrined in the Church of Good Jesus in Goa. He and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux were declared co-patrons of the missions in 1925.

Thursday, December 7, 2023
The Feast of
Saint Ambrose

Ambrose emerges as the man of action who cut a furrow through the lives of his contemporaries. Even royal personages were numbered among those who were to suffer crushing divine punishments for standing in Ambrose’s way. When the Empress Justina attempted to wrest two basilicas from Ambrose’s Catholics and give them to the Arians, he dared the eunuchs of the court to execute him. His own people rallied behind him in the face of imperial troops. In the midst of riots, he both spurred and calmed his people with bewitching new hymns set to exciting Eastern melodies. In his disputes with the Emperor Auxentius, he coined the principle: “The emperor is in the Church, not above the Church.” He publicly admonished Emperor Theodosius for the massacre of 7,000 innocent people. The emperor did public penance for his crime. This was Ambrose, the fighter sent to Milan as Roman governor, and chosen while yet a catechumen to be the people’s bishop. There is yet another side of Ambrose—one which influenced Augustine of Hippo, whom Ambrose converted. Ambrose was a passionate little man. We can picture him as a frail figure clasping the codex of sacred Scripture. This was the Ambrose of aristocratic heritage and learning. Augustine found the oratory of Ambrose less soothing and entertaining but far more learned than that of other contemporaries. Ambrose’s sermons were often modeled on Cicero, and his ideas betrayed the influence of contemporary thinkers and philosophers. His sermons, his writings, and his personal life reveal him as an otherworldly man involved in the great issues of his day. Humanity for Ambrose was, above all, spirit. In order to think rightly of God and the human soul, the closest thing to God, no material reality at all was to be dwelt upon. He was an enthusiastic champion of consecrated virginity. The influence of Ambrose on Augustine will always be open for discussion. Neither is there any doubt that Saint Monica loved Ambrose as an angel of God who uprooted her son from his former ways and led him to his convictions about Christ. .

Remember in your prayers all those in our parish who are sick, that they may find health and comfort:

Jack Orlando, John Ross, Steven Joyce, Judy Hanley-Brickner, John Wrenn, Augustin Cisneros, Thomas Leiter, James Nunez, Vincent Wytak, Carol Ross, Jeffrey Hyans, Marie LoVolpe, Jessica St. Preux, Al Ciani, Alesha Moses, Nancy McCaffrey, Connie Fontana Christopher Wojtalik, Theresa Pacheco, William Goss, Luke Pacheco, Vincenza Papa, Jim Schneggenburger, Anthony Criscuolo, Samantha O'Sullivan, Marilyn Miller, Pat Gravino, John Carmody, Rosario Duran, Vivian Papa, Joel Steinmann, Anna Governali, Tim Graham, Antonio Postiglione, Mario Tamburello, Christopher Araimo, Charles Principato, Jim Kreitler, Humberto Cordova, John Schakir, Margaret Culhane, Benedicto Randazzo, Angelo Niakas, Peter Lopez & Catherine Caravana, Alex Human, Carol Simonsem and Aubrey Madden

Also remember in your prayers all the deceased of the Parish. Please remember to continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood, religious life, diaconate, and married life.

Pray for Vocations

The First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023

"Strengthen your hearts in holiness"

Consider a vocation as a priest, deacon or in the consecrated life.

Contact the Vocation Office at (718) 827-2454 or email:vocations@diobrook.org

HNS BLESSED BE THE NAME OF JESUS

Holy Name Society

On Sunday, December 10th, the 8:00am Mass is the Holy Name Mass. After Mass we will meet in the school basement with a presentation on "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and its's hidden meaning for each of the twelve days. All are invited to attend. A continental breakfast will be served. We look forward to seeing you all.

FOCUS:

We must be active in our hope for Christ's return.

Hope is a theological virtue: "We desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit" (CCC 1817). Hope is an active state of being, not passive. During this Advent season we must be fully alive and fully engaged. We must be committed in our pursuit of the Lord: we must be people of hope!

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCRIPTURE STUDY

"The Words I have spoken to you are spirit and life." John 6:64

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

"But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. [21] And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-22)

Dear SFA Friends and Family

Join us on Thursday, December 7th, at 7:20-8:50PM in the St. Joseph room of the Rectory. The week's study will be on Luke 23-24.

The Gospel readings and study will be conducted using the Little Rock Scripture Study program. Study booklets will be provided.

If you are interested in joining the study group or would like further information, please contact us through The Rectory at **(718) 728-7801.** Please be sure to leave your name and contact information.

Come Join US
Grow in Knowledge and Love of Scripture.
All are Invited … All are Welcome!

Memorials for the Week of December 3, 2023

SANCTUARY LAMP

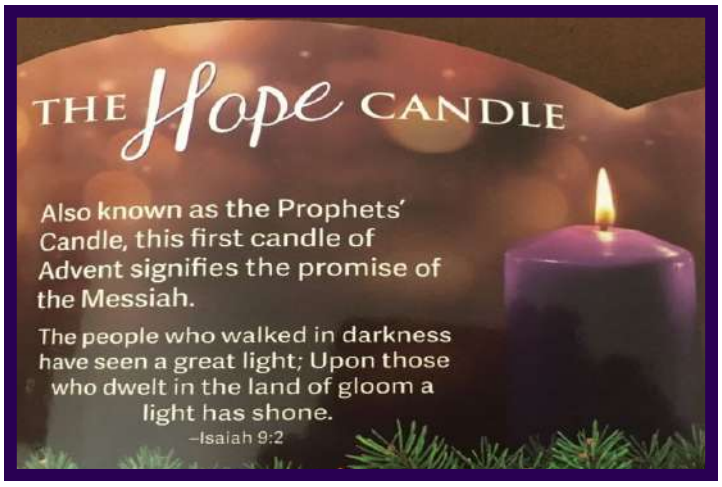
In Loving Memory of
Joseph Spiteri

Requested By:
The Spiteri Family

ALTAR CANDLES

In Loving Memory of
Michael Mangialino Sr.

Requested by:
The Mangialino Family



Mass Attendance for the
Weekend of November 25th and 26th, 2023:

5:00pm	101
8:00am	62
9:30am	77
11:00am	94
12:30pm	50

Total in attendance: 384

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place before the 9:00AM Mass. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed at 8:00AM each morning, Monday through Saturday, giving parishioners an opportunity for private prayer before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. At 8:30AM the rosary will be prayed by parishioners before the Blessed Sacrament. At 8:50AM the Blessed Sacrament will be reposed. Jesus calls us to perseverance in prayer. "Pray without ceasing." "Watch and pray." Eucharistic adoration helps us discover the Real Presence of Christ.

What a wonderful way to begin our day praying before the Blessed Sacrament in silence or praying the Holy Rosary.

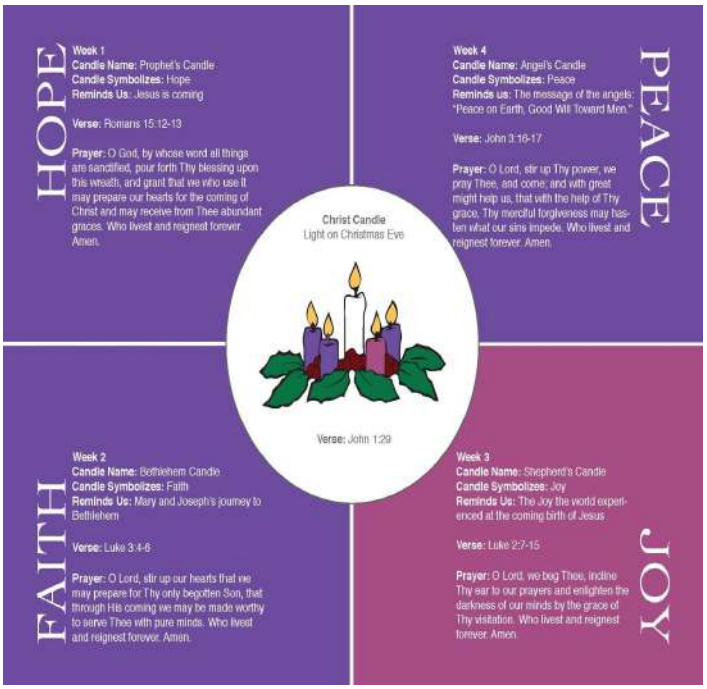
Please make every effort to take advantage of this time with the Lord. We are living in challenging times and we all need the Lord to strengthen our faith and give us the courage to live each day.

Parish Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Parish is a Catholic community that is centered in Jesus, gathers in worship and witnesses the Gospel message. The parish values and welcomes each person's gift of time, talent and treasure. As a faith-filled community, we are committed to minister to the spiritual, educational and material needs of all people.

If anyone would like to memorialize the Advent Wreath Candles please stop by the Rectory.

The donation is $75.00 per candle.



ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

The Advent Wreath Candle will burn in memory of :

Michael Mangialino Sr.
Rose & Denis Sweeney
Lucia, Ralph & Donny Borgia

The season of Advent this weekend . It is a 4-week period of waiting and preparing for the feast of Christmas. During the Season of Advent, one of the beautiful signs we have in our church is the Advent Wreath. The wreath, which has 4 candles, is placed in the church and each week a candle is lit to remind us of our waiting and preparing for the birth of Christ.

This year, you are invited to be part of the candle lighting ceremony. You can sign up as a family or individually. The candle lighter(s) would sit toward the front of the church and at the beginning of each mass, the priest will call you up to light the candle(s) for that week of Advent.

There will be a sign in the vestibule of the church this weekend. Any families, individuals or groups are invited to sign up at any of the masses to light the advent wreath. Please sign up for one of the weekend Masses to participate in the Advent Wreath Lighting Ceremony.

Join us as we renew our desire, anticipation and hope for Christ's coming again.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Weekly Offering

Thank you for your continued generosity of giving each week. Your weekly offering helps us pay our monthly bills.

Sunday 11/26/23: **$3,211.00**
Thanksgiving ***$995.00***

School parents must use church envelopes.

Next weekend, December 9th and 10th, the second collection will be for The Religious Retirement Fund. Please be as generous as your means allow.

Thank You!

Annual Catholic Appeal 2023
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

THANK YOU to all who have contributed to the Annual Catholic Appeal. As of Monday, November 27th, we have pledged **$40,767** towards our goal of **$41,679**. If you have not contributed to the Appeal, please prayerfully consider a donation to help us reach our goal.
I am grateful for the sacrifices you make in supporting the Appeal. The Appeal will finish on December 31, 2023. I am confident we will make our goal with your support.
Please know you are remembered in prayer each day.

NOTE A CORRECTION IN MASS TIMES

In your most recent mailing of your weekly envelopes, the Christmas Mass Schedule is enclosed. There is a mistake in the mass times for Sunday, December 31st. The morning mass schedule for Sunday, December 31st is 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am and 12:30pm.

There will be NO Vigil Mass on Sunday, December 31st.

All the other mass times are correct.

Do You Enjoy Singing?

Then use your voice to praise the Lord!
Join the St. Francis of Assisi Choir.
We meet every Monday evening at 7:00PM in the choir loft in church.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THIS WEEK

December 3—December 9

Sunday, December 3
9:30AM-Pre-Confirmation Name Mass
9:30AM-Children's Liturgy
10:40-12 noon CCD

Monday, December 4
12:00-3:30PM-Golden Age
3:00-3:45PM Children's Choir
7:00PM Adult Choir

Tuesday, December 5
6:30PM—AA Meeting

Wednesday, December 6

Thursday, December 7
10:00-11:30AM-Legion of Mary
7:20PM Scripture Study

Friday, December 8
The Immaculate Conception
9:00AM Mass
11:00AM Mass
7:30PM Mass

Saturday, December 9

NEXT WEEK

December 10—December 16

Sunday, December 10
8:00AM-Holy Name Mass
9:30AM-Children's Liturgy
10:40-12 noon CCD

Monday, December 11
12:00-3:30PM-Golden Age-Christmas Party
3:00-3:45PM Children's Choir
7:00PM Adult Choir

Tuesday, December 12
3K Winter Celebration
6:30PM—AA Meeting
8:00PM Knights of Columbus Meeting

Wednesday, December 13
Pre-K Winter Celebration
7:00PM Baptism Class

Thursday, December 14
10:00-11:30AM-Legion of Mary
6:00PM I.A.C.A.
7:20PM Scripture Study

Friday, December 15

Saturday, December 16
10:00AM Pancake Breakfast

Come Home to St. Francis of Assisi for Christmas

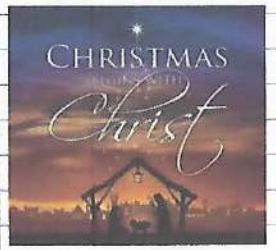
JOIN OUR PARISH FAMILY AS WE CELEBRATE MASS EACH WEEKEND

Masses: Vigil on Saturdays 5pm

Sunday: 8am, 9:30am, 11:00am, 12:30pm (Italian)

Let us worship together and give thanks and praise to God.

December 2023
LECTOR Assignments

	FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT CHRISTMAS EVE	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH
	December 2 -3	**December 9-10**	**December 16-17**	**December 23- 24**	**December 25**	**December 30-31**
Saturday 5:00 PM	Dolores Ratkowski	Debbi Skinner	Edward Kubina	Dolores Ratkowski		Edward Kubina
Sunday 8:00 AM	Rob Laucella	Andrew Soltesz	Rob Laucella	Andrew Soltesz	Rob Laucella	Andrew Soltesz
Sunday 9:30 AM	Josephine Corso	Martha O'Toole	Maria Brooks	Patrick O'Toole	Josephine Corso	Martha O'Toole
Sunday 11:00 AM	Carol Hickey	Jane DiDonato	Carol Hickey	Jane DiDonato	Carol Hickey	Jane DiDonato
Sunday 12:30 PM	Anna Maria Tenaglia	Jackie Macchia	Anna Maria DelCarro	Eterna Brooks	Concetta D'Angelo	Anna Maria Tenaglia
4:00 PM				Edward Kubina		
6:00 PM				Lector Needed		

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Msgr. Ralph J. Maresca V.F., Pastor

2023 Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 **December** Light the first violet candle in your Advent wreath and pray with today's Gospel, *Mark 13:33-37.*	4 Choose a way you can grow closer to Christ in Advent: more mental prayer, penance, almsgiving, Sacraments.	5 Display the stable for the Nativity Scene. Add figures gradually throughout Advent.	6 **St. Nicholas of Myra** Perform a simple act of kindness for someone today in honor of this generous saint.	7 On the Memorial of Saint Ambrose, bishop and teacher, pray for all clergy in the Church.	8 **The Immaculate Conception of Mary** Celebrate by attending Mass and praying a Rosary for our country.	9 Prepare heart and soul to welcome Christ. Make an examination of conscience and attend Confession.
10 Light the second violet candle and meditate on *Mark 1:1-8.*	11 Offer a small sacrifice out of love for Jesus, who offered Himself up for love of you.	12 Today is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Pray for all pregnant women and thank God for the gift of new life.	13 Advent is a busy time for parishes. Call or email your parish office and ask how you can serve.	14 In prayer, forgive someone who has hurt you. Ask for the grace to let go and move on.	15 Call Catholic Relief Services (877-HELP-CRS or www.catholicrelief.org) to see how you can contribute.	16 Las Posadas begins today honoring Mary's and Joseph's search for shelter. Gather friends and go caroling.
17 *Gaudete Sunday* Light two violet candles and the rose one for joy. Pray with *John 1:6-9, 19-28.*	18 Put a lamp or candle in a window to welcome the Christ Child. Light it every night until Christmas.	19 Feed the hungry. Look for someone who is physically hungry or hungry for human kindness.	20 Review your "Advent resolutions" and renew your commitment to them.	21 Spend time before the Blessed Sacrament today to ready your heart for the arrival of the King.	22 Reflect on how your relationship with Christ grew this Advent. Thank Him for the graces you received.	23 Make an effort to see everyone with loving eyes today.
24 The fourth week of Advent lasts only one day. Meditate on the great news the angel brought (see *Luke 1:26-38*).	25 *Rejoice!* Place the Christ Child in the manger. Go to Mass today and rejoice!	*"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:1-7).*				

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293180

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering **hope and joy** in the Catholic faith.

December 2023

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Msgr. Ralph J. Maresca V.F., Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Edmund Campion

Born to a Catholic family in 16th century England, St. Edmund left a brilliant academic career at Oxford to become a Jesuit missionary – a death sentence, since Catholics were being heavily persecuted under Queen Elizabeth I. He traveled around, secretly ministering the Sacraments to English Catholics, until he was betrayed by an informer and arrested. Despite efforts to persuade or threaten him, St. Edmund remained true to his faith. He was martyred with two companions at Tyburn.

Mary's "Yes"

When the angel appeared to Mary and told her what God was asking of her, she didn't have to agree. God gave all of us free will to allow us to make our own choices. Mary said "yes" to God out of love. Her reward (and ours, too) is eternity with her Son.

"And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him" (Luke 2:40).

A "Christ-centered" Christmas is a joyful one

For Catholics, the weeks leading up to Christmas are a sacred time to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming. For a joy-filled Christmas, try these ideas:

Encourage joyful anticipation. As disciples of Jesus, it is our role to help others to believe and hope in the power of God to change the world as He transforms hearts and minds. *"But as for me, I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me"* (Micah 7:7). Look for opportunities to share your confidence in His love.

Focus on prayer. Become an Advent prayer intercessor praying for every soul to come home to God, especially at this time of peace. Ask that that He gives everyone the grace to live a new life reflecting glory on the Messiah.

Serve. Pope Francis said during Advent, "We are so busy with all the preparations, with gifts and things that pass, but let's ask ourselves what we should do for Jesus and for others! What should we do?" The pope said we should continuously ask God what we should do to contribute to the good of the Church and society. We can do "something concrete, even if it is small" to help others. He suggested visiting the lonely, the elderly, the sick or someone in need.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics celebrate the "Immaculate Conception?"

In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed that Mary, by a special grace, was preserved from original and personal sin from her own conception in her mother's womb, in view of her role as the Mother of God. This grace bore immeasurable fruit for all of us in Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. On December 8 – a Holy Day of Obligation – we ask Mary to pray for us, so we, too, receive Jesus into our hearts with a faithful love like hers.

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Have a peaceful, Merry Christmas!

Do you aim for an idyllic Christmas celebration complete with a warm fire, joyful music, and tinsel-covered tree? For many of us, Christmas comes at the end of weeks spent shopping, wrapping, and spending, and is wrought with family tensions, obligations, and exhaustion. Try these steps to keep your sanity and your Savior in your Christmas celebration:

Be realistic. It isn't the goal of the season to make everyone happy. If you don't overspend and over extend before Christmas, you'll be in a better frame of mind when it arrives.

Soothe the beast. Beautiful music can set a soothing tone for your celebration. Pick your favorite holy hymns to put yourself in the Christmas frame of mind.

Reach out. Want to make your own problems seem small? Take on someone else's. Do at least one good Christmas deed for someone needy.

Seek the eternal. Jesus gives us peace, purpose, and perspective. Spend time with Jesus each day of Advent and Christmas to remind yourself of what is most important about Christmas.

from Scripture

Luke 2:22-40, Encountering God in the ordinary

To the uninformed observer, Jesus' birth was unremarkable, and His family was quite ordinary. In fact, when it was time to present Jesus in the temple, His parents couldn't afford the customary offering of a lamb, and instead made the offering of the poor – two pigeons. As faithful Jews, they did all that was required by their faith to thank God for the gift of their child.

Yet, when Joseph and Mary presented their new baby in the temple, Simeon immediately recognized Him as the Messiah. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he prophesied that Jesus would be *"a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel"* (Luke 2:32).

Simeon was not alone in recognizing the Lord in the temple. Anna was also filled with the Holy Spirit. Her faith in God's promises gave her hope. The hope God places in our hearts gives us a desire for the kingdom of Heaven. The Holy Spirit reveals the presence of the Lord to those who want to know Him, receive Him, and to be happy with Him forever.

Feasts & Celebrations

December 3 – First Sunday in Advent. We anticipate Christ's birth and His coming on the last day. Catholics everywhere light candles in an Advent wreath to signal the coming of the light of Christ.

December 12 – Our Lady of Guadalupe (1531). The Blessed Mother appeared as a Native American maiden to St. Juan Diego. She asked St. Juan to carry roses to the bishop as proof. When the roses were emptied from his *tilma*, it retained the image of the Blessed Mother.

December 15 – St. Maria di Rosa (1855). Born into a wealthy family in Brescia, Italy, Paula was renowned for holiness, generosity, and concern for the sick. She founded the Handmaids of Charity in 1840. She took the name Sr. Maria Crucifixa di Rosa.

December 27 – St. John the Beloved (1st Century). As an apostle and friend of Jesus, St. John was known for his fiery temper. Scholars believe he is the "beloved disciple" who sat by Jesus at the Last Supper in John's Gospel.

Q & A How can I make Christmas joy last?

The Church's real Christmas season starts on Christmas Day and lasts until the Baptism of Our Lord. By celebrating the whole season, you can make your Christmas joy last long after you've taken down the tree. Here are some highlights of the season:

Feast of the Holy Family, December 31. Gather for a meal with loved ones, or contact out-of-town friends or family.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1. Dedicate a Rosary to the Blessed Mother, asking her to help you grow in love and trust.

Epiphany, January 7. The example of the Magi honoring Jesus has become a symbol of sharing Him with the world. This is our chance to think about the way we live so that we can better reveal Christ to our world.

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 8. Baptism is our entry into the Kingdom. Take time this day to renew your Baptismal vows and decide what you can change in your life to help you live as Christ did.

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

Success Publishing & Media, LLC
Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™
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http://www.growinginfaith.com

(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)

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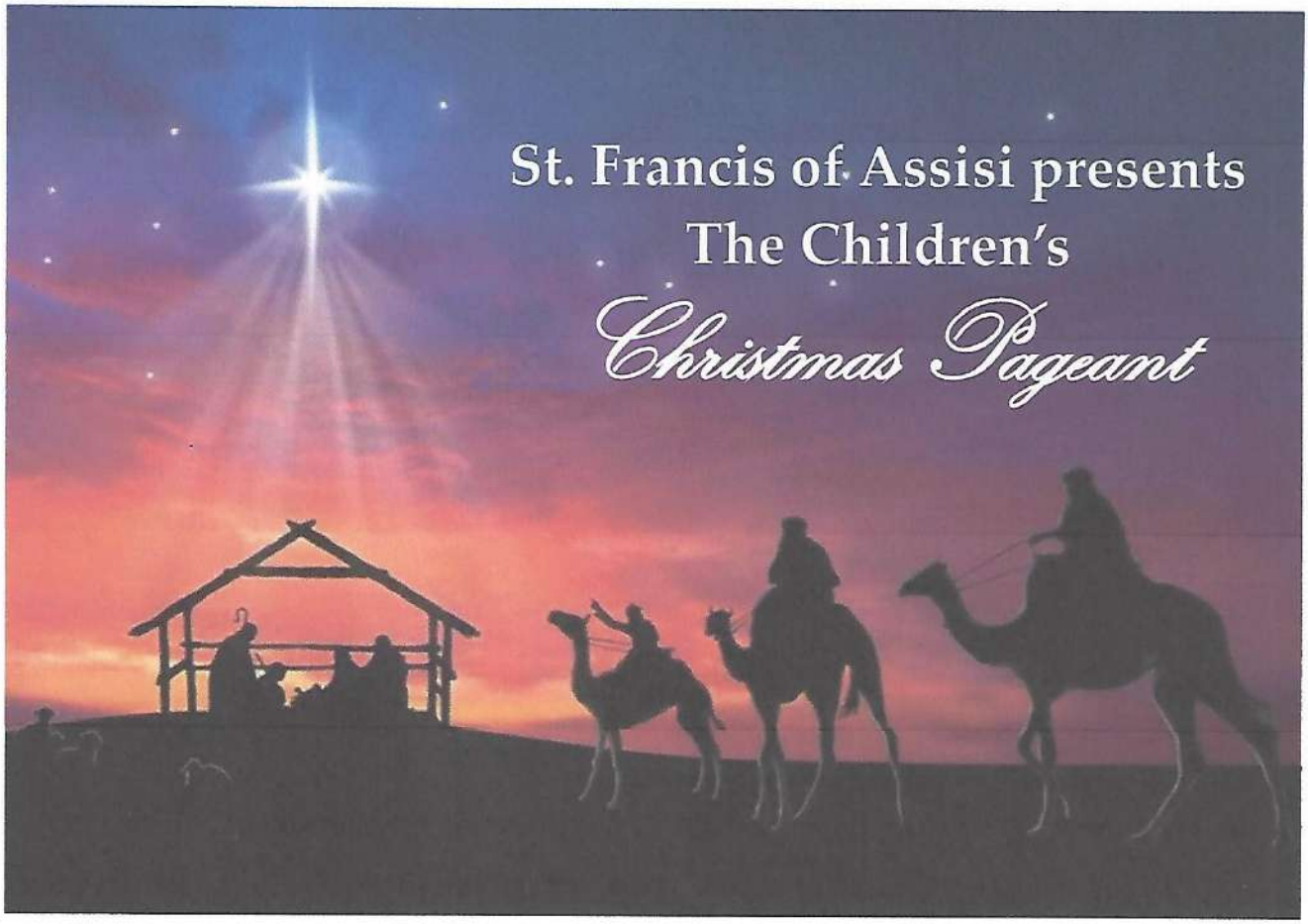

Christmas Eve Family Mass
December 24th at 4:00pm

If you would like your child to take part in this special liturgy, please email Mr. Dan Higgins at DHiggins@sfaacademy.org by **Monday, December 11, 2023**

Make sure to leave your child's name, grade & parent's cell number.

We are also in need of narrators (Grade 6 and above) for our pageant.

REHEARSALS ARE SCHEDULED FOR:

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 3 - 4:00pm

Thursday, December 21, 2023, 3 - 4:00pm

All school age children are invited to participate.

Rehearsals will be held in the church.

"And you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at His birth."

You can take part in decorating St. Francis of Assisi Church by memorializing a Christmas wreath during the Christmas season.

Wreaths will adorn the walls inside of the church and fences outside that surround the Church.

Small messages of dedication will be attached to each wreath.

Donations required to memorialize a wreath:
Outdoor Christmas Wreath: $65
Indoor Christmas Wreaths: $80

Payments should be submitted to the rectory by December 10, 2023

_____

Name _____ Contact # _____
In Thanksgiving of _____
In Loving Memory of _____
From (optional) _____

- Please print neatly -

Advent Giving Trees

The Advent Giving Trees will be setup in the front and back of church and decorated with colored Tags on Friday, December 1, 2023.

Each color Tag identifies the charity that will receive the gifts.
Please tape the Tag to the ***unwrapped*** gift purchased and place it under the Giving Tree before or after any one of the Masses.

Yellow Tags—Catholic Charities
Blue Tags— Hour Children
Green Tags—Marguerite's Pantry
Purple Tags—Transfiguration

ALL GIFTS SHOULD BE RETURNED BY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023.

We thank you for always being so generous and helping.