The Third Sunday of Advent

Mass Intention

SUNDAY, December 17–Third Sunday of Advent
8:00 A.M. John Xerri
9:30 A.M. Carmella Persico
11:00 A.M. The Szetela Family
12:30 P.M. Rino Del Carro
Laura Maffei
The Macchia Family
The Benedetto Family
Bridgit Xanthos

MONDAY, December 18– Weekday
9:00 A.M. The Papa Family

TUESDAY, December 19–Weekday
9:00 A.M. Joseph Salamone

WEDNESDAY, December 20– Weekday
9:00A.M. Marie Salamone

THURSDAY, December 21– Saint Peter Canisius
9:00 A.M. Carmella Persico

FRIDAY, December 22 – Weekday
9:00 A.M. John Purich

SATURDAY, December 23– Saint John of Kanty
9:00 A.M. Purgatorial Society
Charlotte Lechner
Joanne Knetge

5:00P.M. Mike Perrino

SUNDAY, December 24– Fourth Sunday of Advent (Christmas Eve)
8:00 A.M. For the People of St. Francis
9:30 A.M. The Kos Family
11:00 A.M. Dr. Arthur Gualtieri
12:30 P.M. Rino Del Carro
Calogero Giuseppe Filomena
Nancy Manganaro

4:00PM Fabrizio Yepez

6:00PM For the People of St. Francis

Today's Readings

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Readings for the Week

MONDAY: Jeremiah 25:5-8
Matthew 1:18-25

TUESDAY: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a
Luke 1:5-25

WEDNESDAY Isaiah 7:10-14
Luke 1:26-38

THURSDAY: Song of Songs 2:8-14
Luke 1:39-45

FRIDAY: 1 Samuel 1:24-28
Luke 1:46-56

SATURDAY: Malachi 3:14, 23-24
Luke 1:57-66

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 71:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Dear Parishioners,

Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth is a remarkable story of how faith in God's promises brings joy and blessing. John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Spirit, recognizes Jesus' presence in Mary's greeting and leaps for joy in his mother's womb. God's plan of salvation is being set in motion and John the Baptist is a central figure. John is not the light, the one the world awaits, but he comes to testify to the Christ, the Light of the World. His mission is to prepare the way for Jesus and when the Messiah comes, he will step aside. The baptism John offers is one of preparation for the baptism in the power of the Spirit that will come with Jesus.

The last of God's prophets was John the Baptist who was sent to prepare the way for Jesus. John clearly told the Jewish authorities that he was neither Elijah nor the Prophet. Most of all he was not the Messiah. John's mission was to call to repentance the faithful ones, among whom Christ's mission would become effective.

John announced the presence of Christ, the Messiah who had come to the world. We, who are called to follow Christ, are also called to testify to the Spirit of the Lord that we have been given. We must first recognize Christ in our own lives and then we can, by our witness and actions, make him known to others. When we are responsive to the action of the Spirit in our lives, then we will know what God is asking of us.

We are called to take up the mission of Christ. The world may look on Christmas as an historical occasion marked with gift-giving and receiving, but for all Christians, it is a call to become partners with Jesus in bringing love, compassion, justice, peace, faith, hope, and all that is of God, into our world. When we work to build love and justice and peace in our families and communities, we are making Christ more visible in our society.

Our prayer must be one pf preparing to receive Jesus when he comes. His words: "*What you do for the least of my people you do for me,"* must serve as a reminder and a challenge. The kingdom is built up by our response to God's call, to create a society of peace based on justice for all in a world filled with new hope.

All God's Blessings,
Msgr. Maresca

THE TRADITION OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Pope Benedict XVI

Following a beautiful and firmly-rooted tradition, many families set up their crib immediately after the feast of the Immaculate Conception, as if to relive with Mary those days full of trepidation that preceded the birth of Jesus. Putting up the crib at home can be a simple but effective way of presenting faith, to pass it on to one's children. The crib helps us contemplate the mystery of God's love that was revealed in the poverty and simplicity of the Bethlehem Grotto.

St. Francis of Assisi was so taken by the mystery of the Incarnation that he wanted to present it anew at Greccio in the living nativity scene, thus beginning an old, popular tradition that still retains its value for evangelization today. Indeed, the crib can help us understand the secret of the true Christmas because it speaks of the humility and merciful goodness of Christ, who *though he was rich he made himself poor* for us (2Cor 8:9). His poverty enriches those who embrace it, and Christmas brings joy and peace to those who, like the shepherds in Bethlehem, accept the angel's words: *Let this be a sign to you: in a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes (*Lk 2:12*).* This is still the sign for us too, men and women of the third millennium. There is no other Christmas.

SEASON OF HOPE...

Monday, December 18th, is
Reconciliation Monday.
Confessions will be heard from
4:00-6:00PM
7:00-9:00PM.

All are encouraged to make use of the wonderful Sacrament to experience the Mercy of God.

ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

The Advent Wreath Candle will burn in memory of :

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

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

Jack Orlando, Steven Joyce, Judy Hanley-Brickner, John Wrenn, Augustin Cisneros, Thomas Leiter, James Nunez, Vincent Wytak, John & 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.

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023

"Blessed are those who trust in the Lord"

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

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.

FOCUS:

Prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Today's readings speak to us of preparing for the coming of the Lord through repentance. Repentance requires us to be honest about the times we have fallen short in loving God and our neighbor as the Lord commands. Knowing that we are sinners is a necessary step in recognizing our need for the forgiveness God graciously offered us through His Sonm whose coming into the world we prepare to celebrate.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCRIPTURE STUDY

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

Dear SFA Friends and Family

The Scripture Study group wil e on winter recess until January when we will begin a new study. The new study will be announced at a later date.
Wishing you Joy and Peace.

**"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb …
For at that moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy" (Luke 1:41-44, 44)**

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!

Christmas Flower Envelopes can be returned in any collection. Please be sure to write the name(s) legibly. The list of names will be printed in the Bulletin. Thank you.

Christmas Mass Remembrance Envelopes can be returned in any collection. Please mark the envelope with the name(s) of those you want remembered, living or deceased, in the Christmas Novena of Masses. Those envelopes will be placed on the altar for the Novena of Masses.

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.

Mass Attendance for the
Weekend of December 9th and 10th, 2023:

5:00pm	109
8:00am	71
9:30am	168
11:00am	102
12:30pm	40

Total in attendance: 490

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.

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 12/10/23:	**$5,292.00**
Religious Retirement Fund	***$1,008.00***

School parents must use church envelopes.

Next weekend, December 23rd and 24th, the second collection will be for fuel to keep our church warm during the winter months.

Please be as generous as your means allow.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Parish Office Schedule

Saturday, December 23rd–9:00AM to 2:00PM
Sunday, December 24th–Closed
Monday December25th Closed
Tuesday, December 26th –=Closed

The office will reopen on Tuesday, December 27th at 9:00AM

Please Note: There will be no evening hours on December 27th and 28th.

Saturday, January 30th–9:00AM to 2:00PM
Sunday, December 31st–Closed
Monday, January 1st–Closed

The Rectory will reopen on Tuesday, January 2nd at 9:00am.
Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Thank you to all who have signed up for the Advent Wreath Candle lighting. There are still a few masses that are in need of candle lighters. The poster will remain in the back of the church throughout the Advent season as a reminder to all those who have signed up.

Just a reminder that the candle lighter(s) will sit toward the front of church and at the beginning of each mass the priest will call you up to light the Advent Wreath Candle(s).

THANK YOU

Thank you to Kelsey and Nicholas Mistretta for decorating the Advent Giving Trees and preparing all the gifts to be picked up. Also, I'm grateful to Fiona L., Colette L., Sofia C., Dakota D., Louis M., and John M. for assisting in this project.

In addition, Thank you to all our parishioners who purchased the gifts for the children to have a wonderful Christmas.

Worship Schedule

Confessions **-** Monday, December 18th
4:00-6:00PM
7:00-9:00PM

Saturday, December 23rd
4:00-4:30PM

Mass Schedule **-**

Saturday, December 23rd
9:00AM & 5:00PM

Christmas Eve-Sunday, December 24th

8:00AM, 9:30AM, 11:00AM & 12:30PM (Italian)
4:00PM ~ Family Mass
6:00PM ~ Christmas Mass

The Nativity of the Lord-Monday, December 25th

8:00AM, 9:30AM, 11:00AM & 12:30PM (Italian)

New Year's Eve-Sunday, December 31st

8:00AM, 9:30AM, 11:00AM & 12:30PM (Italian)

NO 5:00PM Mass

Mary, The Holy Mother of God -Monday, January 1st

9:00AM & 11:00AM

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THIS WEEK

December 17—December 23

Sunday, December 17
9:30AM-Children's Liturgy
10:40-12 noon CCD
1:30PM-Youth Group to Pack Gifts

Monday, December 18
RECONCILIATION MONDAY
Confessions: 4:00 PM-6:00 PM
7:00 PM-9:00 PM

Tuesday, December 19
6:30PM—AA Meeting
6:30PM Christmas Show-MCH

Wednesday, December 20
6:30PM Christmas Show-MCH

Thursday, December 21
10:00-11:30AM-Legion of Mary
6:00PM I.A.C.A.-Christmas Party

Friday, December 22

Saturday, December 23

NEXT WEEK

December 24—December 30

Sunday, December 24
Mass Times
8:00AM
9:30AM
11:00AM
12:30PM (Italian)
4:00PM Christmas Eve Pageant & Family Mass
6:00PM Christmas Vigil

Monday, December 25
Blessed Christmas to All
Mass Times
8:00AM
9:30AM
11:00AM
12:30PM (Italian)

Tuesday, December 26

Wednesday, December 27

Thursday, December 28
10:00-11:30AM-Legion of Mary

Friday, December 29

Saturday, December 30

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.

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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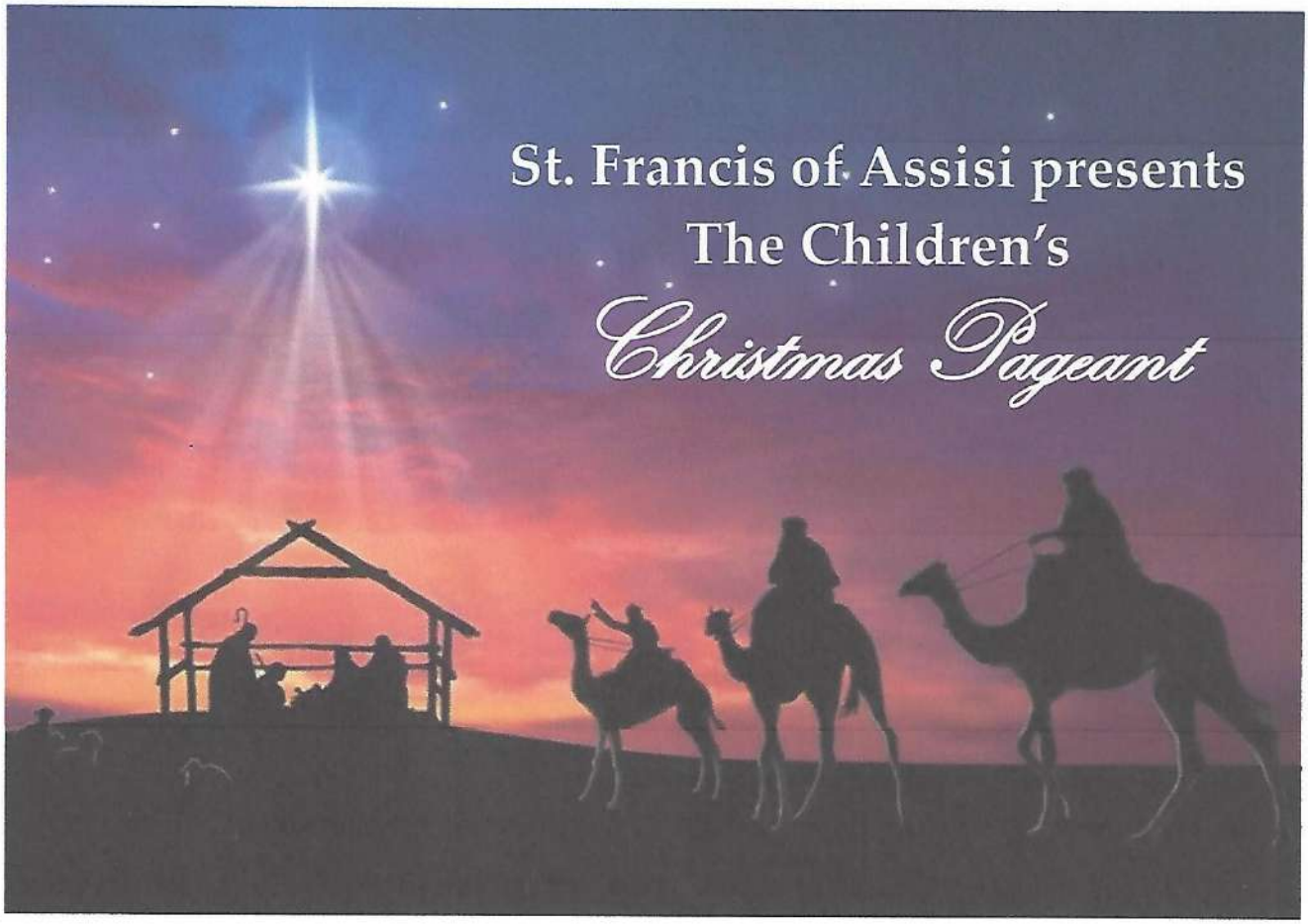

Christmas Eve Family Mass
December 24th at 4:00pm

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 15, 2023

_____

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

- Please print neatly -

Advent Giving Trees

The Advent Giving Trees have been setup in the front and back of church and decorated with colored Tags.

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 (**must** be returned by 12/15/23)
Purple Tags—Transfiguration

ALL GIFTS SHOULD BE RETURNED BY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023.

We thank you for always being so generous and helping.