Fourth Sunday of Advent

Mass Intentions

SUNDAY, December 22 – Fourth Sunday of Advent
8:00 A.M. The Teklits Family
9:30 A.M. Ana Balint
11:00A.M. Victoria Marino
12:30 P.M. Rino Del Carro

MONDAY, December 23–Saint John of Kanty
9:00 A.M. Carol Bongiovi

TUESDAY, December 24-Christmas Eve
9:00 A.M. Esperanza Eiaw
4:00 P.M For the People of St. Francis
6:00 P.M. The Kos Family

WEDNESDAY, December 25– Nativity of the Lord
8:00 A.M. Christmas Novena
9:30 A.M Deceased Members of the Giordano Family
11:00 A.M. Margaret Bradicich
12:30 P.M. Nancy Manganaro
Antonio Bruno

THURSDAY, December 26–Saint Stephen
9:00 A.M. John Purich

FRIDAY, December 27-Saint John, Apostle and Evengelist
9:00 A.M. The Papa Family

SATURDAY, December 28-The Holy Innocents
9:00 A.M. Purgatorial Society
Christmas Novena
The McHale Family
Jennifer Lynn Weraer

5:00P.M. Ivan Zgaljic

SUNDAY, December 29– The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
8:00 A.M. Benedetta Galati
9:30 A.M. Christmas Novena
11:00 A.M. Philomena McPartland
12:30P.M. Rino Del Carro

Today's Readings

Third Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:1-4a
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

"And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spoke out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."
(Luke 1:39-45)

Readings for the Week

MONDAY: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
Luke 1:57-66

TUESDAY: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Luke 1:67-79

Isaiah 62:1-5
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Matthew 1:2-25

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18 11:18-25

THURSDAY: Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59
Matthew 10:17-22

FRIDAY: 1 John 1:1-4
John:20-1a, 2-8

SATURDAY: 1 John 1:5-2:2
Matthew 2:13-18

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:41-52

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Dear Parishioners,

It is only in the Gospel of Luke that we hear the story of Mary's visit from the angel and her subsequent journey to assist Elizabeth. Many questions may arise for us about how Mary's family accepted the news of the coming Child or how soon Joseph was reassured by an angel of Mary's favor before God. These are questions that come from our human curiosity. However, we can be certain of the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit throughout this time of waiting for the coming of the Son of God.

As Mary traveled several days to the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth, she must have felt the presence of the Holy Spirit with her, giving her strength to face all that was unknown about the future. Did she question her ability to fulfill all that was expected of her as the mother of the Son of the Most High? Mary was to be the first disciple of Jesus, and her trust in the plan of God had for her and her Son must have been profound.

Moved by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth proclaimed the great blessing that had come to Mary. She names Mary *blessed among women and mother of my Lord.* One can imagine these two women as they anticipated the births of their children. Both sons had been announced by angelic messengers, and both would be blessed by God and destined for great missions. Faith in the goodness and greatness of God must have been foremost in the minds of both women. Mary's proclamation of joy and humility at being chosen by God for such an important role in the salvation of the world gives us hope too.

Perhaps we can join ourselves with Mary in our own struggle with faith issues. We want to be more hopeful and trusting in God's plan for each of us and can take her as our model. As she was open and obedient to the Holy Spirit at work in her life, we are encouraged to be open and obedient too. We can count on this blessed handmaid of God to intercede for us before God as we honor her as the Mother of Jesus and our mother as well.

All God's Blessings of the Advent Season,
Msgr. Maresca

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

Awyn Profit, Jack Orlando, Steven Joyce, Judy Hanley-Brickner, John Wrenn, Augustin Cisneros, James Nunez, Vincent Wytak, John & Carol Ross, Jeffrey Hyans, Marie LoVolpe, Jessica St. Preux, Al Ciani, Alesha Moses, Nancy McCaffrey, 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, Rick Simonsen, Aubrey Madden, Madison Millett, Leonardo Di Marco and Michelle Yashita and the Polychronakis Family & Victor Di Donato.

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.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024

"Make known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith."

Pray for Vocations

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

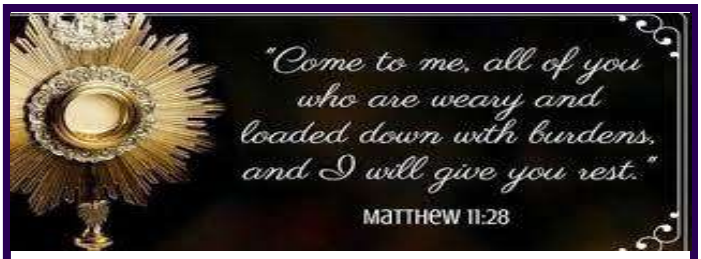
Parish Mission Statement

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:

God's ways are different from ours.

The Lord God is always faithful to His promises. As our celebration of Christmas draws near, we prepare for the coming of Christ by rejoicing with Mary an her cousin Elizabeth, as they witness the mysterious fulfillment of those divine promises in their lives.



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. 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 December 14-15, 2024:

5:00PM	150
8:00AM	48
9:30AM	215
11:00AM	110
12:30PM	36

Total: 559

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCRIPTURE STUDY

"For God so loved the world He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16)

Wishing our parish family Joy and Peace.
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Dear SFA Friends and Family

The SFA Scripture Study Group will be on winter recess until January 9th. We will begin a new study in January on the Gospel Letters written by James, Peter and Jude. We hope you will join us then.

All are Invited … ALL ARE WELCOME!

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.

Grow in Knowledge and Love of Scripture

Memorials for the Week of December 22, 2024

SANCTUARY LAMP

In Loving Memory of

Carol Ann Mendez

Requested by
The SFA Prayer Group

ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

The Advent Wreath Candle will burn in memory of :

Rose & Denis Sweeney
Lucia, Ralph & Donny Borgia
Linda Zuliani
Rosemary Zuliani-Conroy

OCIA

Order of Christian Initiation for Adults

Adult classes have begun for those who need the Sacrament of Confirmation. If you need to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation or need to be fully initiated into the Church (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation) please call Sister Francesca Monday or Thursday, from 9:30am to 3:30pm. Her number can be found on the front of the Bulletin.

Thank you.

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 12/14-12/15	**$3,918.00**
Christmas Gift to Church	***$5,405.00***

School parents must use church envelopes.

Annual Catholic Appeal 2024
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

We are coming to the end of the Annual Catholic Appeal for this year of 2024. If you have donated to the Appeal, I thank you for your support. If you have not given to the Appeal, please consider a donation to support our parish reaching its goal. Our goal is $41,679 and as of December 16th we have pledged $33521.76 and paid $32, 514.76. Thank you to all who have supported the Appeal this year. I appreciate your sacrifices in supporting our parish in this appeal.

Msgr. Maresca

CATHOLIC CHARITIES Brooklyn & Queens
ESTABLISHED 1899

The second collection on Christmas Day is for Catholic Charities of Brooklyn & Queens.
Please be as generous as your means allow.
Thank you for your continued support.

The fourth Sunday of Advent in 2024 will be on December 22nd. The theme of Advent's fourth Sunday is the love that God has for mankind to become man and save us from death and sin. The Advent wreath has four candles - one is lit each Sunday of the four weeks of Advent. Each candle represents a new focus and time of reflection. The fourth week of Advent is the candle of love. Also known as the "angel candle," it is in this fourth week of Advent that we reflect on the ultimate gift of love - Jesus Christ. Jesus is our true example of love, and He came to teach us to love God and others.

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.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THIS WEEK

December 22-December 28

Sunday, December 22
9:30AM-Children's Liturgy
10:40 CCD

Monday, December 23

Tuesday, December 24
4:00PM-Family Mass
6:00PM Vigil Mass
6:30PM AA Meeting

Wednesday, December 25
Rectory Office Closed
Masses at 8:00AM, 9:30AM, 11:00AM and 12:30PM (Italian)

Thursday, December 26
Rectory Office Closed

Friday, December 27
Rectory Office Open 9:00AM-12:00PM
1:00PM-5:00PM

Saturday, December 28
Rectory Office Open 9:00AM-2:00PM

Welcome Home to our young people from college. Hope you are doing well. Its good to have you with us for the Feast of Christmas and New Year's. Enjoy your time off with your family and friends.

NEXT WEEK

December 29-January 4

Sunday, December 29
1:30PM Baptisms

Monday, December 30

Tuesday, December 31
Rectory Office Closed at 5:00PM
Masses at 9:00AM & 5:00PM
6:30PM AA Meeting

Wednesday, January 1
Rectory Office Closed
Masses at 9:00AM & 11:00AM

Thursday, January 2
Rectory Office Open 9:00AM-12:00PM
1:00PM-5:00PM

Friday, January 3
Rectory Office Open 9:00AM-12:00PM
1:00PM-5:00PM

Saturday, January 4
Rectory Office Open 9:00AM-2:00PM

As you enter Church please look up and see the Welcome to St. Francis of Assisi sign. Thanks to the members of our Parish Council.

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

Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **December** Light the first violet candle in the Advent wreath, symbolizing Hope. Reflect on God's faithfulness and the hope of salvation. (See 1 Peter 3:15 for inspiration.)	2 How will you draw closer to Christ during Advent? Will you deepen your faith through intentional prayer, heartfelt penance, generous almsgiving, or a renewed focus on the Sacraments?	3 Practice the Heroic Minute as proposed by St. Josemaría Escrivá. Get out of bed immediately when you wake (don't press the "snooze" button) and offer the day to God.	4 Set out the stable and the empty manger from your Nativity scene. Slowly add the figures throughout Advent.	5 Advent is a busy time for Catholic parishes. Call or email your parish office and ask how you can help.	6 Attend First Friday Mass, in honor of Jesus' Sacred Heart. Pray, "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, make my heart like yours." And He will.	7 Perform a thorough examination of conscience today. Then attend Confession to ready your soul to greet the Savior.
8 Light two violet candles in the Advent wreath each night this week. Sit in silence and enjoy the quiet. Read Luke 2:1-7.	9 *Immaculate Conception* God preserved Mary from sin to be Jesus' mother. Attend Mass and pray a Rosary in her honor.	10 A loving gaze is one of the kindest gifts we can offer. Today, Look at everyone through eyes of compassion and kindness, letting love illuminate each encounter.	11 Ask Jesus to heal whatever keeps you from experiencing God's bountiful love.	12 *Our Lady of Guadalupe* To honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, place a rose in a vase and pray for expectant mothers.	13 St. Francis de Sales said, "Have patience with all things, but... chiefly with yourself." Practice patience with everyone today, especially yourself.	14 Gather friends and neighbors and go Christmas caroling at a nursing home or homeless shelter.
15 *Gaudete Sunday* Light two violet candles and the rose one for joy to mark the halfway point of Advent.	16 Reach out to your parish office to find out how you can make Christmas brighter for a family in need. Your kindness could be their Christmas miracle.	17 Put a lamp or candle in a window to welcome the Christ Child. Light it every night until Christmas.	18 Today, offer a small sacrifice out of love, just for God.	19 Visit the Blessed Sacrament, where Jesus promises to remain with us (Matthew 28:20). Renew your faith in His steadfast love.	20 Refusing to forgive can destroy our interior peace. Ask for the grace to let go and move on.	21 The King is coming! Tidy up your home and prepare to welcome Him.
22 Light all four candles in the wreath, including the last one for peace. Remember we are awaiting Christ and the peace He brings to those faithful to Him (Luke 2:14).	23 Read Luke 2:1-19 and decide how you can make room in your heart for Christ. What steps will you take to welcome His presence and live out His love each day?	24 Meditate on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary or pray Evening Prayer tonight to ready your heart for the birth of the Messiah.	25 *Rejoice!* Place the Christ Child in the manger 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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Worship Schedule

Schedule of Masses

Christmas Eve—Tuesday, December 24th
9:00AM
4:00PM ~ Family Mass
6:00PM ~ Christmas Mass

Christmas Day—Wednesday, December 25th
8:00AM, 9:30AM, 11:00AM & 12:30PM (Italian)

New Year's Eve—Tuesday, December 31st
9:00AM and 5:00PM Vigil Mass

New Year's Day—Wednesday, January 1st
9:00AM and 11:00AM

Parish Office Schedule

Tuesday, December 24th–
Close at 5:00PM
Wednesday December25th Closed
Thursday, December 26th –Closed
Friday, December 27th
9:00AM-12:00PM&1:00PM-5:00PM

Saturday, December 28th
9:00AM-2:00PM
Please Note: There will be no evening hours on December 24th and 31st.

Wednesday, January 1st–Closed

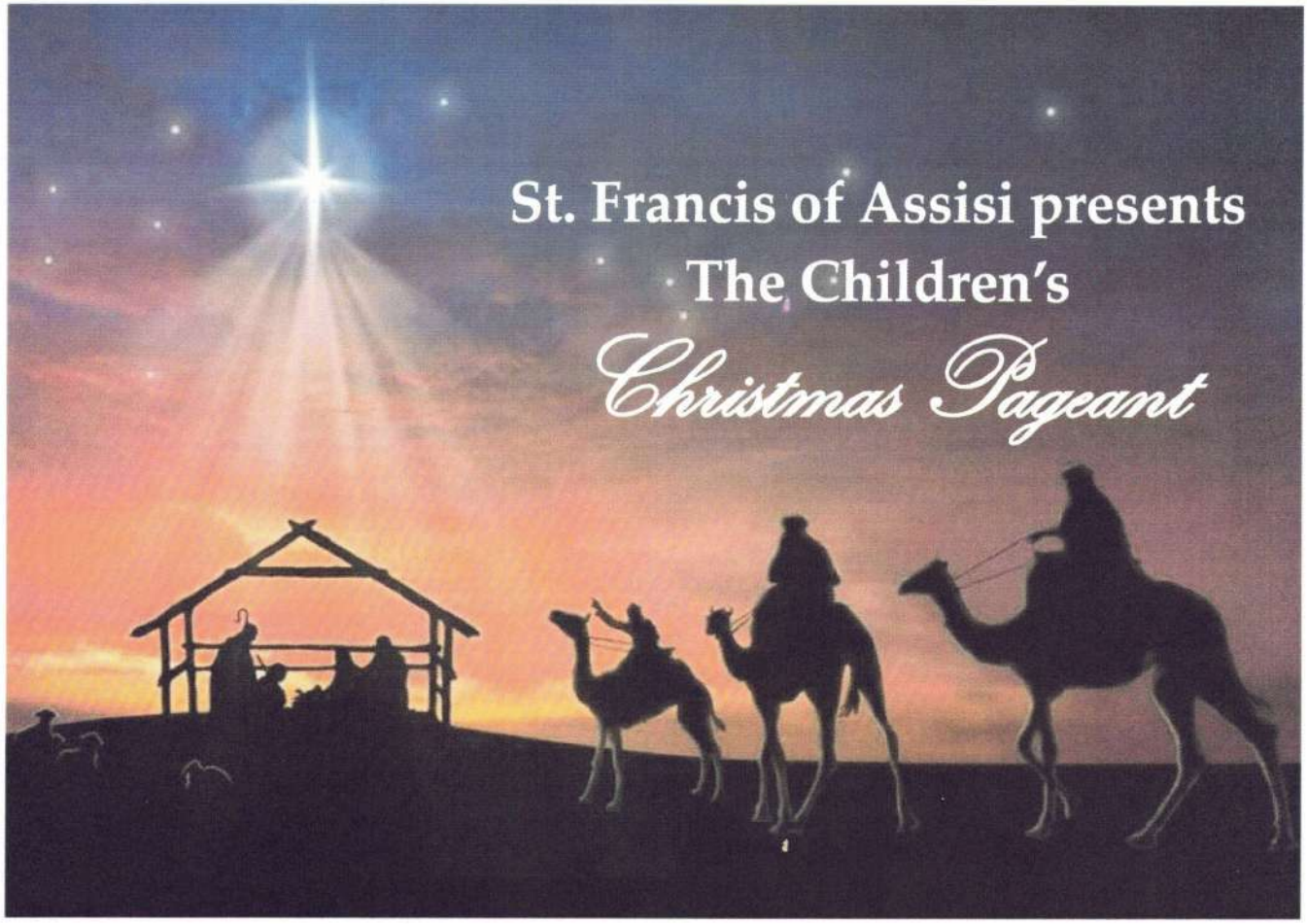
The Rectory will reopen on Thursday, January 2nd at 9:00AM.

Please Note: There will be no evening hours on January 2nd.

Regular office hours will resume on Monday, January 6, 2025.

Many people in the parish participated in our Advent Giving Tree. Your generosity was truly an inspiration. Please know that you bought Christmas joy to many adults and children during this holy season. Thank you for your outreach for those in need.

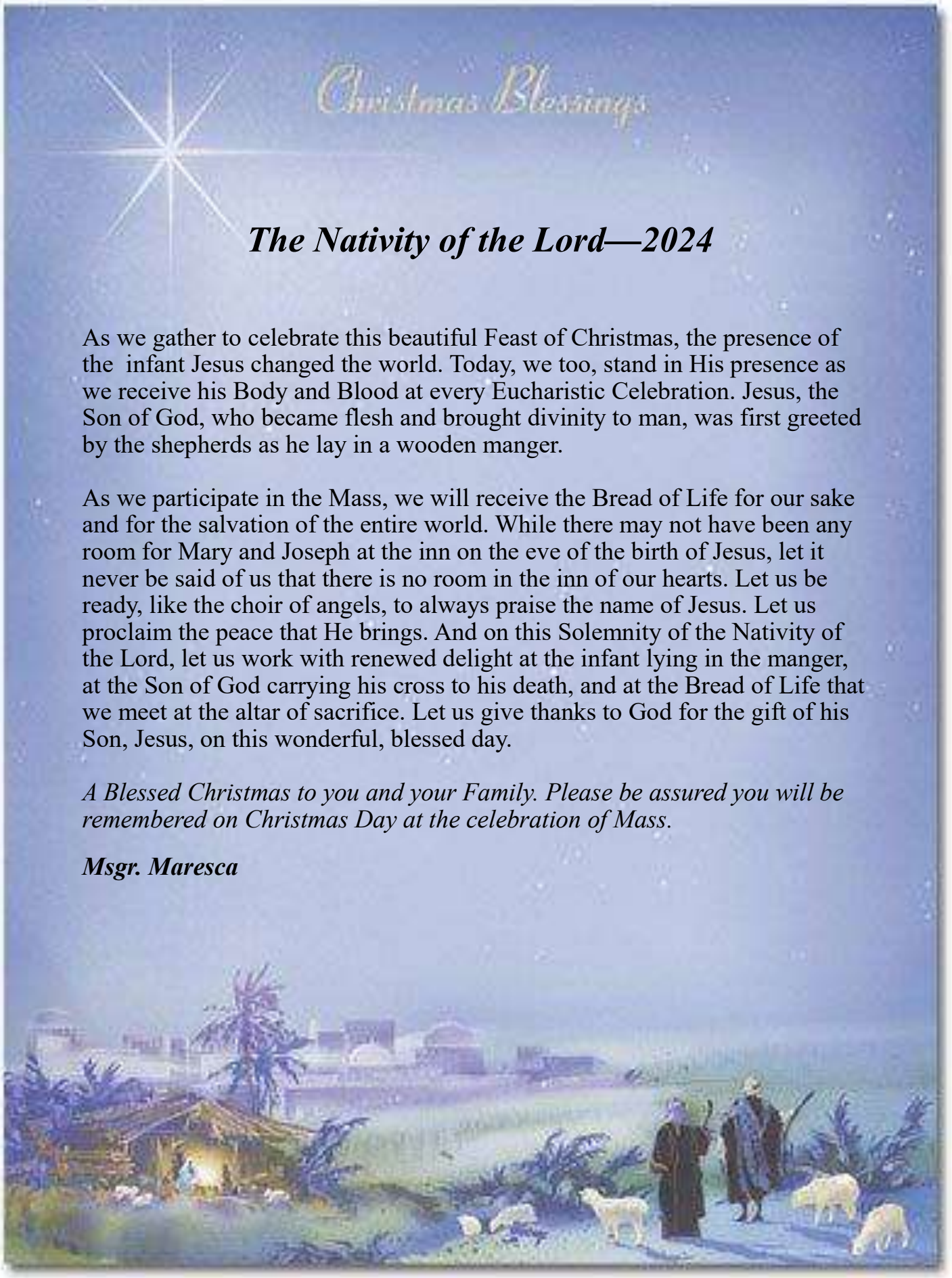
May God bless each of you.



Pageant Performed at Christmas Eve Family Mass
Celebrated by Bishop Robert Brennan
December 24th at 4:00pm

"The angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."
(Luke 2:10-11)

Monsignor, the Deacons & Staff of St. Francis of Assisi wish all our parishioners



The Nativity of the Lord—2024

As we gather to celebrate this beautiful Feast of Christmas, the presence of the infant Jesus changed the world. Today, we too, stand in His presence as we receive his Body and Blood at every Eucharistic Celebration. Jesus, the Son of God, who became flesh and brought divinity to man, was first greeted by the shepherds as he lay in a wooden manger.

As we participate in the Mass, we will receive the Bread of Life for our sake and for the salvation of the entire world. While there may not have been any room for Mary and Joseph at the inn on the eve of the birth of Jesus, let it never be said of us that there is no room in the inn of our hearts. Let us be ready, like the choir of angels, to always praise the name of Jesus. Let us proclaim the peace that He brings. And on this Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, let us work with renewed delight at the infant lying in the manger, at the Son of God carrying his cross to his death, and at the Bread of Life that we meet at the altar of sacrifice. Let us give thanks to God for the gift of his Son, Jesus, on this wonderful, blessed day.

A Blessed Christmas to you and your Family. Please be assured you will be remembered on Christmas Day at the celebration of Mass.

Msgr. Maresca

Dear Parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi,

Greetings and the peace of Christ be with you! We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones in good health and spirits. We are deeply grateful to those of you who have stayed connected with the Church, your presence keeps our parish vibrant and growing. We want to remind some of you of the profound joy and grace that comes with being physically present to celebrate the Eucharist in the Lord's house.

Here are some of the many reasons why we hope you will return to Mass:

- In the Holy Eucharist, we receive the true Body and Blood of Christ, a gift that sustains our faith, fills us with God's grace, and gives us strength to be faithful disciples of Christ. There is no substitute for this intimate encounter with Jesus.
- Being together allows us to share in one another's joys and burdens. We need each other's presence, prayers, and fellowship.
- Attending Mass is not only an act of worship but also an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God. The homily, prayers, and sacred music all help us grow in our understanding of faith and keep us spiritually anchored in these challenging times.
- Your presence at Mass also helps support the vital ministries of St. Francis of Assisi, from outreach programs to education and community events. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of those in need and spread the Gospel in our neighborhood.
- In the midst of our busy and sometimes overwhelming lives, the Church offers a sacred space for quiet reflection and communion with God.

During the Christmas season, we invite you to return home to St. Francis of Assisi Church! Our church provides us with a place where we can come together to give thanks to God, receive His grace, and be nourished by His Word and Sacrament. Our parish has taken steps to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all, and we look forward to seeing you.

Enclosed is a second copy of this letter. Please share it with a friend or neighbor. Let us together rekindle the flame of faith and worship together as God's family united in Christ's love.

In Christ's Peace,
The St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council

Msgr. Ralph J. Maresca. Pastor; Nicolino Scarlatto, Deacon; Nancy Annunnziata; Catherine Bala; Maria Bruno; Josephine Corso; Carol Hickey; Theresa Kubina; Josephine Lanzara; Kelsey Mistretta; Andrew Soltesz

Thursday, December 26, 2024
The Feast of
Saint Stephen

"As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Greek-speaking Christians complained against the Hebrew-speaking Christians, saying that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit…" (Acts 6:1-5). Acts of the Apostles says that Stephen was a man filled with grace and power, who worked great wonders among the people. Certain Jews, members of the Synagogue of Roman Freedmen, debated with Stephen, but proved no match for the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke. They persuaded others to make the charge of blasphemy against him. He was seized and carried before the Sanhedrin. In his speech, Stephen recalled God's guidance through Israel's history, as well as Israel's idolatry and disobedience. He then claimed that his persecutors were showing this same spirit. "…you always oppose the holy Spirit; you are just like your ancestors" (Acts 7:51b). Stephen's speech brought anger from the crowd. "But he, filled with the holy Spirit, looked up intently to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' …They threw him out of the city, and began to stone him. …As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' …'Lord, do not hold this sin against them'" (Acts 7:55-56, 58a, 59, 60b).Stephen died as Jesus did: falsely accused, brought to unjust condemnation because he spoke the truth fearlessly. He died with his eyes trustfully fixed on God, and with a prayer of forgiveness on his lips.

Friday, December 27, 2024
The Feast of
Saint John, Apostle & Evangelist

The vocation of John and his brother James is stated very simply in the Gospels: Jesus called them; they followed. For the three former fishermen—Peter, James and John—that faith was to be rewarded by a special friendship with Jesus. They alone were present at the Transfiguration, the raising of the daughter of Jairus and the agony in Gethsemane. John's friendship was even more special. Tradition assigns to him the Fourth Gospel. John's own Gospel refers to him as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (see John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2), the one who reclined next to Jesus at the Last Supper, and the one to whom Jesus gave the honor of caring for his mother. Jesus gave James and John the nickname, "sons of thunder." While it is not known exactly what this meant, a clue is given in two incidents. In the first, as *Matthew* tells it, their mother asked that they might sit in the places of honor in Jesus' kingdom—one on his right hand, one on his left. When Jesus asked them if they could drink the cup he would drink and be baptized with his baptism of pain, they answered, "We can!" Jesus said that they would indeed share his cup, but that sitting at his right hand was not his to give. It was for those to whom it had been reserved by the Father. On the first Easter, Mary Magdalene "ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciples and told them, 'They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him'" (John 20:2). John recalls, Peter ran side by side, but then "the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first" (John 20:4b). He did not enter, but waited for Peter and let him go in first. John was with Peter when the first great miracle after the Resurrection took place—the cure of the man crippled from birth—which led to their spending the night in jail together. John is traditionally considered the author also of three New Testament letters and the Book of Revelation. His Gospel is a very personal account. He sees the glorious and divine Jesus already in the incidents of his mortal life. At the Last Supper, John's Jesus speaks as if he were already in heaven. John's is the Gospel of Jesus' glory.

Saturday, December 28, 2024
The Feast of
The Holy Innocents

Herod "the Great," king of Judea, was unpopular with his people because of his connections with the Romans and his religious indifference. He was insecure and fearful of any threat to his throne. He was a tyrant capable of extreme brutality. He killed his wife, his brother, and his sister's two husbands, to name only a few. Matthew 2:1-18 tells this story: Herod was "greatly troubled" when astrologers from the east came asking the about "the newborn king of the Jews," whose star they had seen. They were told that the Jewish Scriptures named Bethlehem as the place where the Messiah would be born. Herod cunningly told them to report back to him so that he could also "do him homage." They found Jesus, offered him their gifts, and warned by an angel, avoided Herod on their way home. Jesus escaped to Egypt. Herod became furious and "ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under." The horror of the massacre and the devastation of the mothers and fathers led Matthew to quote Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her chidren…" (Matthew 2:18). Rachel was the wife of Jacob (Israel). She is pictured as weeping at the place where the Israelites were herded together by the conquering Assyrians for their march into captivity. The Holy Innocents are few in comparison to the genocide and abortion of our day. But even if there had been only one, we recognize the greatest treasure God put on the earth—a human person, destined for eternity, and graced by Jesus' death and resurrection.

Prayer for Holy Innocents

We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the holy innocents of Bethlehem by King Herod. Receive, we pray, into the arms of your mercy all innocent victims; and by your great might frustrate the designs of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love and peace; through Jesus Christ ur Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the union of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Dear Parishioners,

On Sunday, October 19, 2025 we will be celebrating the 95th Anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. We give thanks to Almighty God for these past 95 years and the rich history our parish has created here in Astoria. I am delighted to celebrate this anniversary with each of you as we remember the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future.

The theme for the year will be "95 Years of Faith and Family". The committee is planning a special day to mark this milestone. Please mark your calendars to join us! We will begin our celebration at the 9:30am Family Mass. At Mass, we will be unveiling a new statue of Mother Theresa to be hung on the wall opposite the Holy Family. *Kindly contact the rectory if you would like to memorialize this statue in the name of a loved one. More information will follow in upcoming Bulletins.*

After mass, we will gather at Russo's on the Bay in Howard Beach. The cocktail hour will be from 12:30pm to 1:30pm with dinner to follow. We will have live entertainment and raffles. The cost for adults is $150 per person and for children, ages 5-12, $75per child and toddlers, ages 2-4 $30 per toddler. There will be a bus available at the cost of $20 per person that will leave from the front of St. Francis of Assisi Academy. The bus will fill up quickly, so if you plan on using it please make your reservations early.

At the Dinner Dance we will honor Mrs. Maria Bruno and Mr. and Mrs. Phil Mincone. These individuals have been long time parishioners and supporters of SFA. They unselfishly give of their time and talents to help our parish grow and prosper. We give thanks to Almighty God for the blessing they are to our parish family. Well done good and faithful servants!

Each week the Bulletin will contain new information and details about our Anniversary celebration. In our next Bulletin, you will find our Dinner Dance Reservation Form. Kindly spread the word about our 95th Anniversary! If you know of former parishioners who have relocated to other places, pass along the information and invite them to join us for this celebration. Let us give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!

Sincerely in Christ,
Msgr. Ralph J. Maresca

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
cordially invites you to our
95th Anniversary Dinner Dance
October 19, 2025

Russo's on the Bay
162-45 Cross Bay Blvd.
Howard Beach, NY 11414

Cocktail Hour 12:30pm, Dinner immediately following until 5:30pm
Tickets: Adults: $150, Children: ages 5 to 12- $75, Toddlers: ages 2-4 $30

Please reserve a seat(s) at the Dinner Dance for:

1. _____

or

We would like to make up a table:

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

6. _____

Tables of 10 or 12 are available but smaller groups will be accommodated and incorporated.

Please complete this form, enclose your **check** made payable to St. Francis of Assisi Parish and return it to the academy or rectory by September 2, 2025.

Name: _____

Address _____

email_____ Phone # _____

Bus service will be available at an additional cost of $20 per person
Bus departs from the front of school at approximately 11:30am

☐ Yes, I am interested in bus service for #_____ people

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Presents

Middle School Honor Students 1st Trimester

PRINCIPAL'S LIST

Cumulative average of 97 or above

Grade 8

Theodoros Chronas
Emma Gomez
Amir Hussain

Grade 7

Vanessa Blaslov
Niculae Cardoso-Marques
Milania Chiarelli
Raquel Csikortos
Declan Higgins
Lucas Nunez
Sophie Payan
Arianna Soberal

Grade 6

Gianna Budinich
Emma Hussain
Colette Longuinho
Grace Nando
Valentina O'toole
Dionysia Pilarinos
Sofia Salgado
Mia Siano

Congratulations!

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Presents

Middle School Honor Students 1st Trimester

FIRST HONORS
Cumulative average of 93 or above

Grade 8
Franco Brizuela
Sofia Cleghorn
Christian Duran
Chiara Goldberg
Fiona Longuinho
Sean McLawhorn
Valentino Palermo
Andrew Strat
Siobhan Tringali
Nikoleta Vartholomos

Grade 7
Giancarlo Costanza
Kate Loughnane
Lucas Pan
Matthew Pike
Sophia Short

Grade 6
Peter Massaro

SECOND HONORS
Cumulative average of 89 or above

Grade 8
Yumi Dell'Agli
Dakota Diaz
Hudson Geiger
Madison Romero
Katherine Sfirogianakis

Grade 7
Samantha Aguas
Kylee Martinez
John McElwaine
Rylan Nevins
Giovanni Tomasello
Sophia Corral Varela

Grade 6
Mia Pereira Pariente

Congratulations!

CYO St. Francis of Assisi

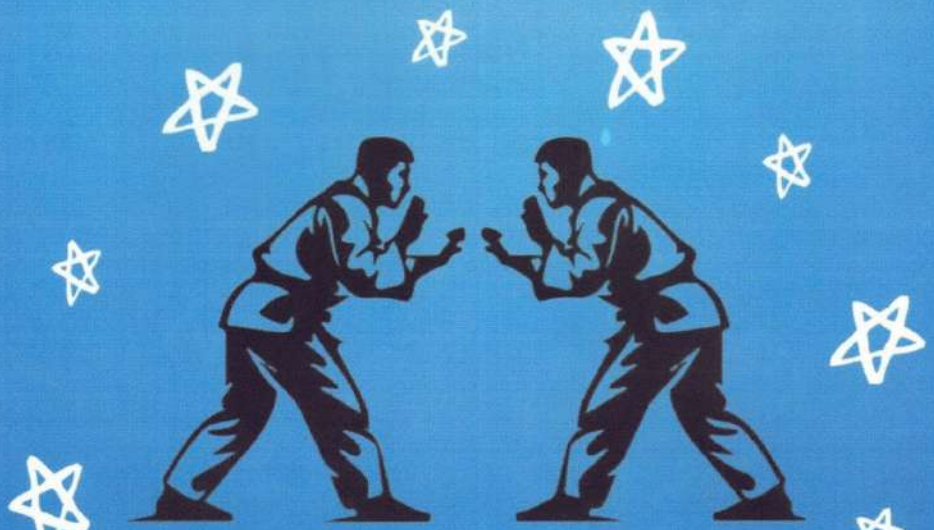
JIU JITSU

WINTER 2025

Thursdays 3:30pm - 4:30pm
Monsignor Campbell Hall
Grades K - 8

10 session $100
Jan 9, 23, 30
Feb 6, 13, 27
Mar 6, 13, 20, 27

Scan QR Code to Register



*** Spaces are Limited***

For more information, please email wildcats.sfa.jiujitsu@gmail.com