



Saint Francis of Assisi of Western Fayette County

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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December 25, 2022

Rev. Marlon Pates, Pastor
mpates@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Rev. Arnel Patayon Tadeo
Shared Parochial Vicar
tadeo@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Masses in Masontown

Monday, Wednesday, Friday ..8:00 am
Saturday6:00 pm
Sunday..... 8:00 am & 11:30 am

Confessions: During Adoration
Adoration: Friday 4:30-6:00 pm

Masses in Footedale

Tuesday & Thursday8:00 am
Saturday:4:00 pm
Sunday.....9:30 am

Confessions: Saturday 3:00-3:30 pm
Adoration: Wednesday 4:30-6:00 pm

Office Hours: Monday through
Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Bulletin Articles: The deadline
for placing articles in the bulletin
is Monday at Noon.

New Parishioners, Welcome!
Please register as soon as possible.

Communion to the Homebound is
provided on a regular basis. Call the
Parish Office to be added to our list.

Sacrament of Baptism: By
appointment. Prior to your baby's
Baptism, you must be a registered,
practicing member of this parish.

Sacrament of Marriage: Requires
parish membership by at least one of
the parties for six months prior to
making arrangements for marriage.

Weddings should be scheduled
one year in advance.

Prayer Chain: To request prayer,
please call Patty 724-245-9746
or Valeria 724-583-9460



Fr. Marlon's Reflections - CHRISTMAS DAY
(Is. 9:1-6; Tit 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-11)



During Advent, we relieve the longing of the Chosen People for the coming of the Savior. On Christmas Day, we joyfully celebrate his birth in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in our first reading, namely, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.... For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulders dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, and Prince of Peace.” Thus, Advent flows naturally into Christmas.

Yet what surprises us is that despite this well-known prophecy, when the royal Infant was finally born, except for a few appropriately called “remnants,” the Chosen People did not realize that the event they had long awaited had already taken place in their midst. Perhaps it was because of the pitiful circumstances of Jesus’ birth which they never expected of someone who was called by Isaiah the “Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.”

What were the circumstances of Jesus’ birth? Luke gives us vivid details in the gospel reading. Both Mary and Joseph were then in Bethlehem because of the census called by the Roman Emperor. While there, the hour for the delivery of Mary’s child came. Unable to find a room in the inn, they took shelter in a cave where animals were kept for the night. There Mary gave birth to a baby boy and laid him in a manger. Though a great company of the heavenly host praised God for his wondrous act of gifting humankind with his Son, saying, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests,” hardly anyone recognized the event for its great significance on each one of us.

However, in order that the birth of his Son would be known at least to some people, God sent an angel to a group of shepherds – simple, poor, and good people but always on the go – and told them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.” Why to a group of shepherds? Perhaps, because the shepherds met all kinds of people as they pastured their flock from place to place, and in God’s mind, they would be the best bearers of the wonderful things they had just heard and seen.

What has God really done for us on that first Christmas night? St John tells us in his gospel (3:16), “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” And it was pure gift – undeserved, unmerited as it was an act proceeding from God’s extravagant love for and generosity to us. In light of this, we can only assume the stance of humility and gratitude before God.

What does God ask of us in return for this wondrous gift? **LOVE**. Love for God and for our neighbors.

To what extent must we love our neighbors? Jesus himself tells us in the gospel of John (13:24), “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” And to make this more concrete, St. John in his first letter (4:20) writes, “If anyone says, “I love God,” but hates his brothers and sisters, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother or a sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

When we help others in a concrete way because we loved them, then we not only understand why God gifted us with his Son but also why he created each one of us.

Jesus was born almost two thousand years ago. If we were among the Chosen People, then, would we have also failed to recognize him? But we do not have to go that far back. Today, yes, today, do we recognize Jesus in his many faces? We will not unless we carry out what Jesus taught the people of his time and now teaches us in the gospel of St. Matthew (25:40), “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Today, as we thank God for the wonderful gift that is Christmas, let us pray for the grace to be able not only to live its message but also to share it with others through our words and actions.

Merry Christmas to all of you, wonderful parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. May the spirit of this season infuse your lives with peace, hope and joy! May your lives be filled with love and happiness! Please know that you are always in our prayers, and we love you! Blessings to all of you, from **Fr. Marlon & Fr. Arnel**.

WHAT ALL THE WAITING HAS BEEN FOR

Today's readings are as familiar to most of us as the carols we sing and the commercials that overwhelm us this holiday season. Often Christmas finds us tired, struggling with preparations and expectations. What we really want to feel is joy and peace.

The stress of preparation, of waiting, is reflected in both Isaiah and Paul's letter to Titus. Luke tells us of the exhaustion that Mary and Joseph felt: a young pregnant wife and her husband, forced to travel just as she is about to give birth, unable even to find a room to stay in. It must have been miserable. They must have been afraid. In the midst of this exhaustion, misery and fear, a child is born, a Son is given. The world is then filled with light and hope, joy and peace. In that moment they, and we, know what all the waiting has been for.

December 26 is the **Feast of St. Stephen**. Because he was the first martyr, he is given the honor of being remembered the day after Christmas. His martyrdom also reminds us that Jesus was to be rejected and put to death. Stephen was one of the original seven deacons, appointed by the apostles to take care of the needs of the poor in the Church. This is a day to reflect on what we can do for the needy, not just this season, but through the year.

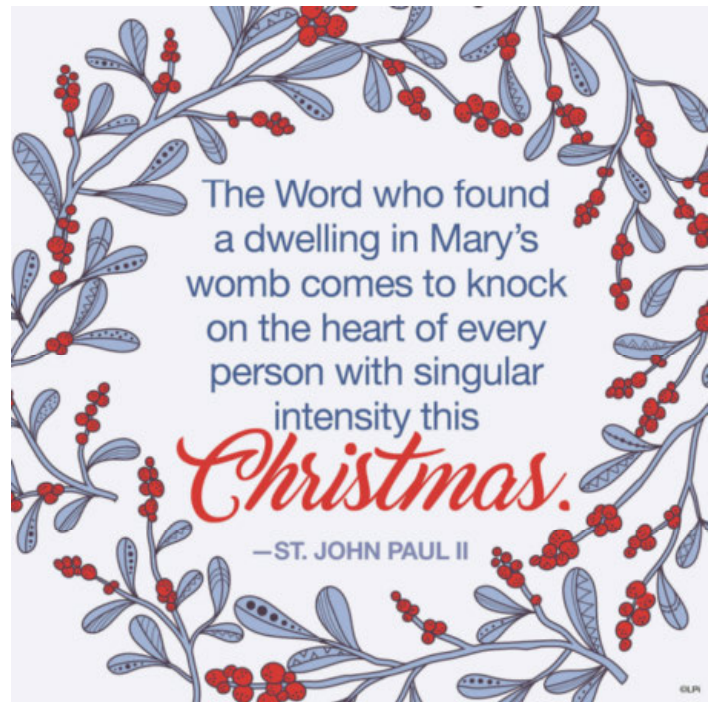
December 27 is the **Feast of St. John the Evangelist & Apostle**, the second of the companions of Christ whose feast follows close upon Christmas. John is known as the "Beloved Disciple" because of the special friendship he shared with Jesus. His feast day is a good occasion to recall the importance of Christian love and fellowship.

Part of the traditional celebration of this day was the blessing of wine because, according to legend, Saint John once drank a cup of poisoned wine without ill effect.

December 28 is the **Feast of the Holy Innocents**. When the Magi told Herod about a newborn king, he ordered the death of all male babies in Bethlehem. Only a few days after one of the gladdest days, we remember one of the most tragic events in the Bible. In every generation there will be innocent victims and their weeping mothers.

December 29 is the **Feast of St. Thomas Becket**. He served as chancellor during the reign of Henry II. As Archbishop of Canterbury, he defended the freedoms and rights of the Church. The king began making unjust demands; Thomas and Henry began to clash. King Henry eventually had Thomas killed in his cathedral. Thomas is the most famous martyr of the Middle Ages.

December 30 is the **Feast of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**. Family life is rooted in the unconditional love of God as witnessed by the Holy Family.



The Christmas Season lasts from the evening of Christmas Eve until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

The Practice of Stewardship

For unto us is born this day a Savior! In response to so great a love, only the gift of my whole self will do. You have given us Yourself, dear Lord; in love and thanksgiving. I commit myself afresh to You.

Thank you for the following memorial donations given to Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in memory of **Sam Bartoni** by Edwin & Elaine Rockwell, Linda Rohol, Frank & Priscilla Michalik & Family

The Children & Family Services Appeal is taken on Christmas. The Christmas Feast commemorates the gift given to each of us by God without question of our merit or eligibility. Your gift to this annual appeal can help to change the future of an individual, family or child.

Organist Needed: We are in need of an organist for the 4:00 pm Saturday Mass and the 9:30 am Sunday Mass at the Footedale worship site. If you or someone you know is interested, please call the Parish Office or contact Fr. Marlon - mpates@dioceseofgreensburg.org





OUR FASCINATING FAITH - Christmas Time

The feasts that make up **Christmas Time** all illuminate, in their own way, the fundamental mystery of the Incarnation that stands at the heart of this sacred season.

Each celebration sheds its own distinct light on our conviction that, in the birth of Jesus, earth and heaven have been wedded together for the sake of our salvation. The feasts of the Holy Family, Mary the Mother of God, Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord all have their own particular histories but they have been joined together in a single seasonal flow that invites us to trace the unfolding meanings of the Incarnation from myriad perspectives.

As we follow the successive meaning of Mary's motherhood, the significance of the Magi's visit and the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, we are invited to explore in deeper and deeper fashion the staggering truth that Jesus has shared completely in our human experience, has truly become one with us, fully human while remaining fully divine.

Upcoming in the New Year

There will be NO coffee and donuts next weekend. Coffee and donuts resume the first Sunday of February.

Pro-Life Mass Saturday, January 12

Stand up for Life! The Youth Ministry of our parish will host a Pro-Life Mass on Saturday, January 21, 2023, at 10:00 am in Footedale. Father Daniel Carr will preside. The Rosary, led by Youth Ministry, will be prayed at 9:30 am prior to the Mass. A social at the social hall follows. To help us plan, please RSVP to Rita Masi at 724-208-6779 or rmasi00@yahoo.com or Kim at 724-366-8901 or kstavish@dioceseofgreensburg.org if you plan to attend the social. Please join us!

Thank You to our Bulletin Sponsors! Our bulletin is provided to us, free of charge, through the generosity of the businesses and individuals who sponsor ads each week. Please support these individuals and be sure to thank them for their generous support of our parish!



The Accent On-Air: The Symbols of Christmas explores the popular symbols of Christmas, including St. Nicholas, one of the most recognizable figures in the world. Bishop Kulick talks about his visit to the Vatican, his audience with Pope Francis and the importance of the gift of the Eucharist. Plus, learn about the meaning behind the Christmas decorations in your home: the wreath, Christmas tree and luminary lights are all steeped in symbolism. Bells will be ringing this season as churches across the Diocese join together to ring church bells as a reminder to many to celebrate the birth of our Savior; and Bishop Kulick is back in the kitchen with a traditional Slovak Christmas Eve soup. "The Accent On-Air" is always on at TheAccentOnline.org

An **Open House at Saint Vincent Basilica** is planned for Thursday, **December 29**, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Tours and light refreshments are planned; reservations are **not** necessary. For information, contact Erin at 724-539-8629 or erin.colcombe@stvincent.edu

CATHOLIC EDUCATION NEWS

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, the twelve schools of the Diocese of Greensburg now have millions of dollars in tuition assistance available! Become a TOP Student today. Call 724-552-2565 or visit www.CatholicSchoolsGuide.org

TOP Student Program extended to higher education at Franciscan University

Because of the continued generosity of an anonymous donor, Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Greensburg could receive priority for tuition assistance, regardless of income, if they choose to attend Franciscan University of Steubenville.

This new initiative is funded by the same anonymous donor who funded the TOP Student Program in our diocese which has provided tuition assistance to 800 families in Catholic schools across the four counties of the Diocese and has helped to increase enrollment in Diocesan Catholic schools by 20% in just two years. That is one of the largest Catholic school enrollment increases in North America! For information, visit Franciscan.edu/JPII-scholarship, call 1-800-783-6220 or email admissions@franciscan.edu

The **Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg** are accepting applications for **substitute teachers**. Send current resume to the Office of Catholic Schools at CatholicSchools@DioceseofGreensburg.org For more information, call 724-552-2594.

Never Miss a Bulletin! Sign up to have our weekly bulletin emailed to you at www.parishesonline.com

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 24 -- The Vigil of Christmas

4:00 pm-F (A) All Living & Deceased Parishioners
 6:00 pm-M (A) All Living & Deceased Parishioners
 8:00 pm-M (M) All Living & Deceased Parishioners
 10:00 pm-F (M) All Living & Deceased Parishioners

Sunday, December 25 -- The Nativity of the Lord

9:00 am-F (M) All Living & Deceased Parishioners
 11:30 am-M (M) All Living & Deceased Parishioners

Monday, December 26 -- Saint Stephen

8:00 am-M Donna Parish (Caroline Marella)

Tuesday, December 27 -- Saint John, Apostle

8:00 pm-F Sonny & Kathy Palo (Brothers Ron/Frank)

Wednesday, December 28 -- The Holy Innocents

8:00 am-M Rose Liptock (George Homa)

Thursday, December 29 -- Saint Thomas Becket

8:00 am-F Donald Bello Sr. (Son, Michael)

Friday, December 30 -- The Holy Family

8:00 am-M John Biskup (Frank/Mary Maykuth)

Saturday, December 31 -- Vigil: Mary, Mother of God

3-3:30 pm-F Confessions
 4:00 pm-F (M) Mike/Betty Olesh & Steve/Rose Bello
 5-5:30 pm-M Confessions
 6:00 pm-M (A) Ellen Duffy (SFOA Masontown Choir)

Sunday, January 1 -- Mary, Mother of God

8:00 am-M (M) Mary Zaiglin (Rita Arendosh/Family)
 9:30 am-F (M) Walter Suba (Denise/Rick Bobincheck)
 11:30 am-M (A) Pro Populo

(M) Fr. Marlon / (A) Fr. Arnel

Mass Readings for the Week Ahead

Monday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22
 Tuesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1-8
 Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Mt 2:13-18
 Thursday: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:36-40
 Friday: Sir 3:2-14; Mt 2:13-23
 Saturday: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18
 Next Sunday: Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21



With great longing, we have been preparing our hearts and our homes for this day on which we celebrate the birth of our Messiah and Savior. We recall that glorious night when the Blessed Mother bore Jesus into an expectant world, realizing that Jesus is also born in our hearts and in our world here and now, made present through one another and in the Eucharist we celebrate. May this “good news of great joy that will be for all the people” continue to be incarnated in our lives and our world.

Merry Christmas

May you be blessed this Christmas and New Year with **Truth** to make your journey clear, with **Love** for those you most hold dear, with **Joy** to fill you through each day, with **Faith** to keep the doubts away, with **Grace** to meet your every need, with **Strength** for every kindly deed, with **Jesus Christ** and all He brings - for in Him you have everything!
Merry Christmas to all!

Memorial Candles burn this week in loving memory of or for the special intention of:

† **Sanctuary** - Sylvia Volek
 requested by her family

Frank E. Check
 requested by his sister, Carol Warman

† **Blessed Mother** - Wayne Edenfield
 requested by his family
 Lindakay Rendina
 requested by Kay Rendina

† **Saint Joseph** - Sam Bartoni
 requested by Linda Rohol

† **Saint Anthony** - Peter Rohol
 requested by his grandchildren

† **Sacred Heart** - George & Elizabeth Parish
 requested by daughter, Mary Anne Hritz





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