



Saint Francis of Assisi of Western Fayette County

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

101 West Church Avenue, Masontown, Pennsylvania 15461

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*A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg
A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust*

Bishop Larry J. Kulick, J.C.L.



Rev. Dick Anthony Cortado
Administrator

dcortado@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Masses in Masontown

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

Confessions: Saturday 5:00-5:30 pm

Adoration: First & Third
Fridays - 4:30 to 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: Second & Fourth
Wednesdays - 12:30 to 2:00 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.

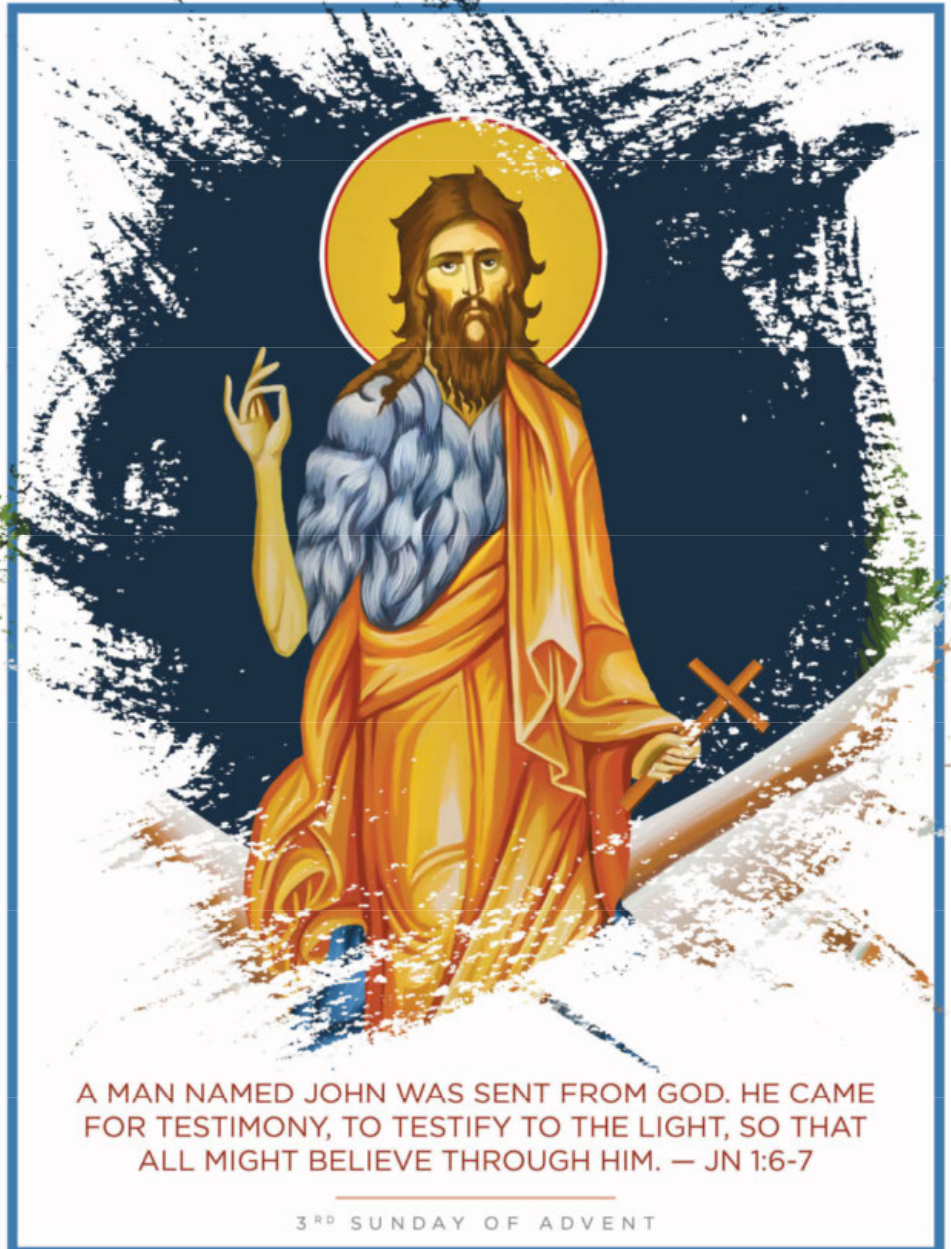
Sacrament of Baptism: By
appointment. Prior to your baby's
Baptism, you must be a registered,
practicing member of this parish.

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

December 17, 2023



A MAN NAMED JOHN WAS SENT FROM GOD. HE CAME
FOR TESTIMONY, TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT, SO THAT
ALL MIGHT BELIEVE THROUGH HIM. — JN 1:6-7

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

EXCERPTS FROM THE LECTIONARY FOR MASS ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD. ©LPI

Thoughts from Father Anthony

**Third Sunday of Advent - Year B** (Jn. 1:6-8, 19-28)

It was Christmas time. Gifts were a-coming; a parish priest was waiting excitedly. Then one by one they came in, in different boxes with colorful wrappings and ribbons. A son of a bakery owner handed him a package, to which the priest said: "Ah, I know what's inside even without opening the box!" and smelling it, he said: "These are chocolate cakes." A gift from a meat shop owner was given and the priest said: "I know its contents," smelling again, he remarked: "These are my favorite homemade sausages." Then came a present from a wine store owner, and the priest said: "I'm sure I know again what is inside, it's wine!" He sniffed the box, but he couldn't figure out the scent. It didn't smell like wine. So he shook it but couldn't hear bottles clanging. Then some fluid gushed out from the box and he tasted it ... again ... then again. It didn't taste like wine. Very much intrigued, he opened the package and, to his surprise, he found a puppy inside.

God sent us a gift this Christmas. We cannot presume to know its value unless we open our hearts to receive it with gratitude. Gift giving should not be converted into a game of guessing, but an occasion of appreciating. The gift within every gift is the opportunity to discover - not only the content, but the sacrifice of the giver. The gift of the Son was given to us by a loving Father. Such a priceless gift emanates from the resplendent love of both the Giver and the one Given. The Father gave a gift, not out of His surplus not excess of treasure and power, but of His very own. He has not sent something but someone, who is no less than His own beloved Son. In Christ He has given us the gift of Himself - Emmanuel, God is with us, "God's love for us was revealed," St. John declared, "when God sent into the world His only Son, so that we could have life through Him" (1 John 4:9). Let us then praise God for His precious gift for us.

The Third Sunday of Advent is called "Gaudete Sunday." "Gaudete" is the first word, in Latin, of today's Entrance Antiphon: "Gaudete in Domino semper" - "Rejoice in the Lord always." To remind people that they are preparing for the very joyful occasion of the birth of Jesus, the celebrant wears rose-colored vestments. The third candle in the advent wreath, a rose colored one was lighted.

Let us heed the call of the apostle Paul in the second reading: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Isaiah in the first reading declares: "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God."

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist was being questioned of his identity. He humbly told them that he was not the Messiah that Israel was waiting for. He also denied that he was Elijah who had a reputation of appearing every now and then. Nor was he the Prophet, the one foretold by Moses. Then he revealed to them his mission by quoting Isaiah, the prophet: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord."

The attitude of John in today's Gospel is a good strengthening act. He was humble. He was tempted to represent himself as the Messiah, or even Elijah and the Prophet. He could have gotten away with it for he was very popular. The Jews came to him for baptism of repentance but he knew who he really was and was humble enough to admit that his role was a precursor of Jesus. He admitted that he was not even worthy of tying Jesus' sandals and that it was Jesus who must increase and he must decrease. John humbly accepted his role and was more concerned about the fulfillment of the plan of God than his own fame. The humility of John is more of proclaiming and living the truth than degrading oneself or keeping a low profile. John truthfully responded to the questions thrown at him. He was tempted to lie and make false claims but he knew his role and who was the true Messiah. He was faithful to the truth. How about our humility? How about our truth? One glaring truth which we must improve on, is the truth that we are God's creatures and God is our Creator.

When we gain intelligence, riches, power, and fame, we tend to claim to be better than God or that we do not need God anymore. We fail and forget our true place before God. Even in our prayers, we tend to dictate on God. It is not His will anymore but our will that should happen. We boast that we know better and God seems ignorant, if not too slow and wrong. How dare we regard God like that?

This season of advent, as we await the Lord's coming, it is good to step back for a while, be silent, and reflect on how we have lived our lives in relation to God. John the Baptist is mentioned in the Gospel for two consecutive Sundays. His presence will continue to be mentioned even during Christmas day. It is a testimony of the importance of exercising humility during these times. It is but apt for the very reason for the season, Jesus Christ, is Truth, Humility personified!

This week, rejoice! Gather spiritual strength. Exercise humility. Look forward to satan's defeat and the Lord's coming in victory!

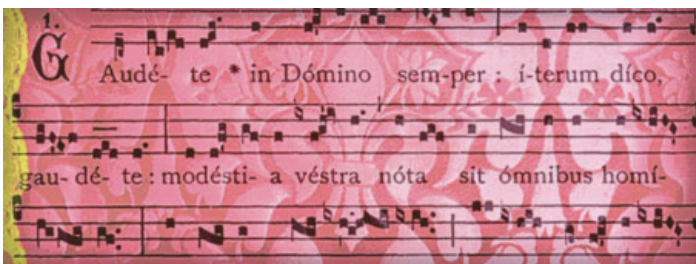
Lighting the Way for Joy



Halfway through this season of preparation, we celebrate **Gaudete Sunday**, this Sunday of joy and gladness. With eager anticipation we prepare our hearts for Christ as we prepare our homes for Christmas. Recalling that Mary and Joseph could not find a proper place for Mary to give birth to our Savior, we commit to preparing a proper place to receive our Lord anew into our lives. In Him, the blind see and the deaf hear, the poor are fed and the dead are raised. May we ready ourselves to see the wonders the Lord can do in our midst.



Today we light the third candle on our Advent wreath. It is the "Shepherd's Candle" which symbolizes Joy and honors those who were the first to share the Good News in word and song as we celebrate around our star-topped Christmas tree.



Advent resounds with the theme of **RECONCILIATION** and the **call to repentance**.

That call is not about dwelling on our sins and being even more burdened by them, but the opposite: bringing them to God in sorrow and hope for forgiveness.

It is a fitting time to approach Jesus in the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** and be able to approach Him in the Eucharist on Christmas with a renewed heart.

Regional Advent Confession Schedule

Sunday, December 17 - 3:00 pm

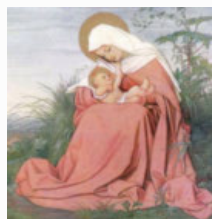
St. Joan of Arc, Farmington

Tuesday, December 19 - 6:00 pm

St. Mary Nativity, Uniontown

Thursday, December 21 - 6:00 pm

St. John the Evangelist, Uniontown



Third Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 17 - 5:00 pm

at the Footedale Worship Site

Music by the Combined Parish Choir
Scripture Readings proclaimed by the Youth of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish

Light Refreshments follow in the Social Hall

Join us for a special Advent evening of Scripture and Song

Parish Family Christmas Tree - Everyone is invited to bring an ornament, unique to you and your family, to place on our Parish Family Christmas Tree.

Christmas Wafers (Oplatki) are available at the Church entrances. The offering is \$2.00. There are four wafers per package (three white, one pink).

The Christmas wafer reflects a tradition which is at least 2,000 years old. The father of the family solemnly breaks the wafers on Christmas Eve and distributes them to those present as a symbol of love and peace. These pieces are then shared with wishes for luck, health and happiness.

Christmas Flower Memorials - Please use the envelope from your packets to list the names of your loved ones.

These will be placed on the altar and remembered in prayer throughout the Christmas season.

Christmas Offering - In your charity of giving this Christmas, please remember the Parish. We rely upon the Christmas and Easter collections to meet outstanding expenses. Your generous response to the needs of the Parish is much needed and greatly appreciated.

Lord, I rejoice at the Good News of Your Coming. Make my heart ready!

Christmas Mass Schedule

Sunday, December 24

4:00 pm in Footedale

(Children's Mass)

9:00 pm in Masontown

Monday, December 25

9:00 am in Footedale

11:00 am in Masontown





O Antiphons

The final week of Advent is like the stillness of night just before dawn. All nature is waiting for the sunrise. This week is a time of special prayer during which the Church sings the **O Antiphons** each night from December 17 to 23. These antiphons are ageless sighs of deep longing. Each begins with a striking name for God. Slowly pray and meditate on these ancient scriptural gems each morning and evening this week:

December 17: O Wisdom

O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern
All creation with your strong yet tender care.
Come and show your people the way to salvation.

December 18: O Adonai

O sacred Lord of ancient Israel,
Who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush,
Who gave him your holy law on Sinai mountain;
Come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.

December 19: O Flower of Jesse

O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a
sign for all peoples; the powerful stand silent in your
presence; the nations bow down in worship before you.
Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.

December 20: O Key of David

O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel
Controlling at your will the gate of heaven;
Come, break down the prison walls of death for those
Who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
And lead your captive people into freedom.

December 21: O Dawn

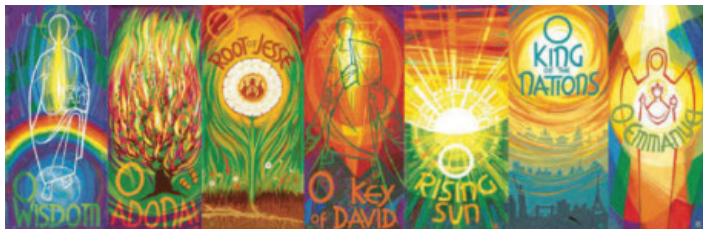
O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light,
Sun of justice: Come, shine on those who dwell
In darkness and the shadow of death.

December 22: O King

O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human
Heart; O keystone of the mighty arch of humankind;
Come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.

December 23: O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations,
Savior of all people: Come and set us free, Lord our God.



rest in peace

Parish Sympathy is expressed to the families of
† **Frances Arlene (Krofcheck) Oravets**
who was buried Saturday, December 9

† **Eugene Kanar**
who was buried Monday, December 11.

May God grant to them eternal life and comfort
their families. May they rest in peace.



ADVENT is a time in which, instead of thinking about
gifts for ourselves, we can give words and gestures
of consolation to those who are wounded as Jesus did
with the blind, the deaf and the lame. - Pope Francis

The Practice of Stewardship

All of the people in today's readings - the prophet Isaiah,
the Virgin Mary, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist - seemed
to understand clearly and rejoice in what God was
calling them to be and to do. Do I?

Thank you for the following donations given to
Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in memory of:
Donna Parish by Estella Oppman; *Sophia Berdar*
& *George Rantovich* by Rosemary Reagan;
Bernadette "Dolly" Kroll by Colette Freiberg

Thank you to the *St. Joseph Lodge #367* for a \$100
donation to Saint Francis of Assisi Parish and a \$100
donation toward the care of St. Thomas Cemetery.

Stewardship of Treasure

Sunday, December 10: \$5,708; loose \$584;
monthly \$1,375; children \$7; online \$352;
Immaculate Conception \$1,876; Accent \$60;
End of Year \$275 totaling \$10,237

Our parish is very grateful for your support!

Catholic Accent PODCAST *Stunned Disciples*

Imagine the shock of Jesus' closest friends when they
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Father Andrew J. Hamilton and
Father Christopher J. Pujol
for this 10-part podcast.

Be sure to follow, like and subscribe to
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to get updates on new episodes.

MASS SCHEDULE ©LPI

Saturday, December 16 -- Vigil: 3rd Sunday of Advent

4:00 pm-F Joan & Paul Cech Sr. (Mike/Missy Komara)
6:00 pm-M John & Carolyn Takacs (Jerry & Cheryl)

Sunday, December 17 -- 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:00 am-M Donna Waslousky (Fedor Family)
9:30 am-F John V. Shinsky Jr. (Drs Briella/Brynn/Blyke)
11:30 am-M Martha Batis (Caroline Marella)

Monday, December 18 -- Late Advent Weekday

8:00 am-M Michael Shine (Debbie Hlebinsky)

Tuesday, December 19 -- Late Advent Weekday

8:00 am-F Sonny & Kathy Palo (Brothers, Frank & Ron)

Wednesday, December 20 -- Late Advent Weekday

8:00 am-M Joseph P. Matyus Jr. (John/Nancy Gearing)
12:30-2:00 pm-F Adoration / Confessions

Thursday, December 21 -- Saint Peter Canisus

8:00 am-F Mike & Betty Olesh and Steve & Rose Bello

Friday, December 22 -- Late Advent Weekday

8:00 am-M Joe & Brian Coll (George Parish)

Saturday, December 23 -- Vigil: 4th Sunday of Advent

3-3:30 pm-F Confessions
4:00 pm-F Renne Kremposky (Mike/Missy Komara)
5:00-5:30 pm-M Confessions
6:00 pm-M Donna Stoffa (Sister, Nancy Stajnrach)

Sunday, December 24 -- 4th Sunday of Advent

8:00 am-M Pro Populo
9:30 am-F Erma Voytek (Yanik Family)
11:30 am-M Theresa Cassidy (Paul/Bonnie/Charlene/Jennifer)

Sunday, December 24 -- VIGIL of CHRISTMAS

4:00 pm-F All Living & Deceased Parishioners
9:00 pm-M All Living & Deceased Parishioners

Monday, December 25 -- The NATIVITY of the LORD

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

Mass Readings for the Week Ahead

Monday: Jer 23:5-8; Mt 1:18-25
Tuesday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25; Lk 1:5-25
Wednesday: Is 7:10-14; Lk 1:26-38
Thursday: Sg 2:8-14; Lk 1:39-45
Friday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; Lk 1:46-56
Saturday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Lk 1:57-66
Next Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-16; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38



joy



Through this season of Advent, we are called to prepare for the Lord's coming by repenting of our sins, removing the obstacles that make it difficult for us to recognize His approach and remaining ever watchful for His arrival but today we rejoice (in Latin, Gaudete) because we focus on the knowledge that the One whom we await comes to embrace us, transform us, and redeem us. Gathered together in joy, we look forward - as always - to His coming.

Pray the Act of Hope each day this week:

"O my God, trusting in Your infinite goodness
And promises, I hope for pardon for my sins,
The help of your grace, and life everlasting,
Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesday, December 20, in Footedale

12:30-1:30 pm: Exposition / Confession
1:30-1:45 pm: Our Lady of Perpetual Help Novena
1:45-2:00 pm: Benediction

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

- † **Sanctuary** - *My loving family: Dad, Mom, Andrew Berdar & Mary Ann Suba*
requested by Marge Jacobs
- † **Blessed Mother** - *Donna Waslousky*
requested by Jude, Erik, Greg & Stacy
Sophia Berdar
requested by Stephanie Liptock
- † **Saint Joseph** - *Joseph & Anna Sumego*
requested by children, Debi, Ed & Roseann
Joseph & Sophie Fronczek
requested by Syl & Debi Fronczek
- † **Sacred Heart** - *Mary Rohol*
requested by her family



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