



Saint Francis of Assisi of Western Fayette County

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

101 West Church Avenue, Masontown, Pennsylvania 15461

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Website: www.sfoafayette.org



*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 31, 2023



THE HOLY FAMILY

“For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples.”

- Lk 2:30-31



Thoughts from Father Anthony



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph - Year B

We celebrate today the Feast of the Holy Family. Though the focus of our celebration is the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we also dwell on our own family, as well as the family of humankind. For when the Word of God becomes flesh, Jesus Christ joins our family. Jesus experiences the situation in which the family finds itself, both the positive and the negative aspects, the lights and the shadows.

The feast today is an occasion for us to go back to the central reason of family and family life. We are threatened more than ever with the onslaught of materialism, a love of objects rather than a love for persons. Spouses may justify their unreasonable absence from the family because they are busy making money. They may easily compromise their valuable relationships because they want to prosper economically. Love then becomes absent; it is replaced by figures and frayed nerves. The children suffer most from the lack of presence and attention of parents. We may succeed in acquiring wealth but end up with a broken marriage and problematic children.

The present situation needs a drastic turnabout that must be initiated by parents to save their own families from such depersonalization and disturbing absenteeism. The essential mission of every family is not to gain wealth at the expense of meaningful relationships. Rather it is to create an atmosphere where love can grow and flourish among its members. If God wished to teach us that communion of love and holiness can be achieved merely through possessions, then Jesus should have been born to wealthy parents. If there were parents who should have worked hard, they were the parents of Jesus but, while money and working hard are important, Jesus was born to poor Mary and Joseph. This is to show us that in spite of deprivation and poverty, their foremost priority was to seek out the will of God in their lives. They would rather be pleasing to God than be the first in the eyes of humans and love among them was the fundamental element that defined the nature of their family as holy.

It is to be recognized, with compassion, that many families today experience a lot of anxieties, conflicts, and problems. Many are besieged and harassed by the demands of life. Do not be discouraged. Christ is telling us, "Do not be afraid." The Holy Family experienced the worst that could happen - poverty and persecution - but they remained true to God and to each other. They give us the inspiration and the assurance of God's loving presence every step of the way.

God will not answer our prayers if we are praying for a perfect family. We are making the wrong prayer, for there can be no family without problems. We must guard against the erroneous view that family life should be free from serious difficulties. A holy and loving family is not one in which trials do not occur, but one in which members work together to address family problems in the light of God's will. Perhaps there can never be a trial-free family, but each family can be a faithful family. The Holy Family of Nazareth showed us that possibility in our own families - to possess the right winning combination.

What does the Gospel teach us about today's celebration? The peaceful presentation of the Child Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple. Mary and Joseph are presented as a couple steeped in the tradition and religiosity of their people. Simeon prophesies that Jesus is a sign that will be contradicted, set for the fall and rise of many in Israel. This will cause a sword passing through the heart of Mary - and of many others. St. John Paul II presents the Holy Family as the prototype and example for all Christian families. The life of this family passes in silence in a small town; it experiences the trials of poverty, persecution, and exile yet, in all of these, it glorifies God in an incomparably exalted and pure way.

Christmas is the feast of families. It gathers family members in the heart of the home and around the crib where we find figures around the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Pope Francis encourages the faithful to contemplate the Christmas story - the story of the family - in the icon of the Christmas crèche to guide us to the meaning and importance of the Nativity scene. As families gather around the "nativity" or Christmas crèche, may they rediscover the importance of the family. The experience of the pandemic COVID-19 or war has taught us that God is our support, and our family is our place of refuge. More than ever, we rely on family members to support each other, as we face the trials and challenges brought about by the wars.

With the economy in recession everywhere, parents and adult members have to work harder and longer to tide the family through. Children have to be guided. Unnecessary expenses have to be forgone but the joy of Christmas cannot be cancelled or postponed until better times. The "Nativity," according to Pope Francis, "teaches us to contemplate Jesus, to experience God's love for us, to feel and believe that God is with us and that we are with him, his children, brothers and sisters all, thanks to that Child who is the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary and to realize that in that knowledge we find true happiness."

As we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family, may we entrust each family to Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

CHRISTMAS TIME

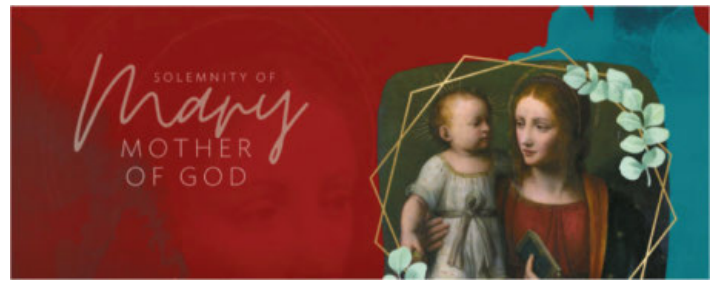
Our **Merry Christmastime** unfolds with the blessing of a new year, the astonishing good news of peace on earth and with the treasures pondered within the heart of Mary.

The Christmas Season extends through the Baptism of the Lord - Monday, January 8, 2024.



New Year's Eve - as the year comes to a close, we look back and remember. We are both grateful for the many ways God has blessed us and sorrowful at the pain the year may have brought us. All around us today, we hear the nostalgic words of the Scottish song, "*Auld Lange Syne*" which evokes the memory of people and places from our recent and distant past. In faith we know that Christ, the beginning and the end, is present in every moment of our lives, uniting the people and events of the past, present, and future by His love. Name a good thing that happened during the past year and thank God for it; then mention a hope for the coming year.

New Year's Day - following the ancient tradition of celebrating the octave (eighth day) of an event, we celebrate again the mystery of Jesus' birth, but this time with our eyes on Mary. When we celebrate her as the Mother of God, we are at the same time celebrating the divinity of Jesus, who was truly human and truly God.



On New Year's Day, we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. How appropriate that on the first day of every year we honor Mary, the Holy Mother of God, for it was her willing obedience to God's plan that enabled the Incarnation and therefore initiated what in time became Christianity.

Although it is **not a holy day of obligation this year**,

Masses will be celebrated as follows:
9:30 am in Footedale and
11:30 am in Masontown

We invite everyone to join us as together we prayerfully welcome the New Year 2024.

January 1st is also the **World Day of Peace** and so we look to Mary, the Queen of Peace - who bore the Prince of Peace - as our model and inspiration for holding peace in our hearts, our communities and in our world.

The **World Day of Prayer for Peace**, begun by Saint Pope Paul VI is celebrated on the first day of the New Year. On January 1st, the Holy Father asks that, in a special way, we pray for Peace on Earth.



"It would be our desire, then, that this celebration take place each year as a sign of hope and promise, at the beginning of the calendar which measures and guides the journey of human life through time, in order that peace, with its just and salutary equilibrium, will dominate the unfolding of history yet to come." - Saint Pope Paul VI

A Prayer for Peace

O Lord, Heavenly Father, give us Your peace!
 We ask this of You together with all of Your children
 In whom You have planted the desire for peace.
 We ask this together with all those who, in unspeakable sufferings, are sighing for peace. After this life, Which we have spent in restlessness, take us into the Kingdom of Your eternal peace and love. Accept all those who fell as victims of wars and conflicts. Accept also all those who are looking for peace on wrong paths. We ask this through the intercession of our Heavenly Mother, the Queen of Peace. Amen.



January is the Month of the Holy Name of Jesus

At the Holy Name of Jesus, every knee must bend To proclaim Him as Lord. In His Name, the faithful gather to worship, the Gospel is preached, sins are forgiven and prayers are offered to the Father.

UNITED IN PRAYER

Each year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. You are invited to answer the Holy Father’s request and join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month.

The Holy Father’s intention for January is For the Gift of Diversity in the Church

Let us pray that the Spirit will help us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

2024 CALENDARS

Thank you to the **John S. Maykuth Jr. Funeral Home** and to the **Terravecchia - Haky Home for Funerals, Inc. of Masontown** for providing calendars to our parish for the new year 2024. Our very grateful thanks! The calendars are available at the Church entrances.



Tuesday is the Feast of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen. They were great friends who helped to prepare the way of the Lord. Basil challenged people to live simply and care for the poor and dying. Gregory, though shy, became a great preacher.

Wednesday is the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. Through the particular efforts of Saint Bernardine of Siena, devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus was promoted through the inscription IHS (abbreviation of the Greek name for Jesus).

Thursday is the Feast of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton She was a wife and mother of five children; foundress of the first congregation for women religious in the USA (the Sisters of Charity) who are devoted primarily to the education of the poor and to teaching in parochial schools. She is first native born citizen to be canonized.

Friday is the Feast of Saint John Neumann known for his holiness and learning, he was a promoter of parochial schools who authored two German catechisms. He was the first American bishop to be canonized.

We wish the year 2023 farewell and pray that 2024 brings us peace. We honor Mary from whose womb sprang the new life we have been celebrating these past eight days. We begin a New Year by raising our hearts and voices to our spiritual mother.

The Practice of Stewardship

Whatever you do, says Saint Paul to the Colossians, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. Give thanks to God the Father through Him.” And so it is that we offer our gifts in the Eucharist through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. See Colossians 3:17

Thank you for a donation to the new boiler fund that was given in memory of *Teofilio Pates* by Rose Gabeletto and family

Stewardship of Treasure

December 17: \$6,010; loose \$573; monthly \$965; children \$3; online \$422; Year End \$1,515; total \$9,488
Our parish is grateful for your continued support!

UPCOMING PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES

Pro-Life Rosary and Mass - Saturday, January 13

The Youth Ministry of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish will host a Pro Life Rosary and Mass on Saturday, January 13, 2024 at the Masontown Worship Site Fr. Daniel Carr, Director of Pro-Life Activities for the Diocese of Greensburg will be the main celebrant The Rosary for Life will be prayed at 9:30 am followed by Mass for Life at 10:00 am

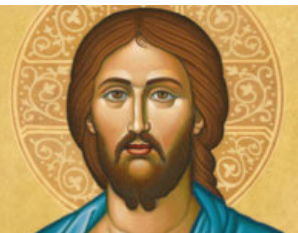
A reception with light refreshments follows in the cafeteria. RSVP to kstavish@dioceseofgreensburg.org by January 6 if you plan to attend the reception.

Pray for Life Day - Friday, January 19

Everyone is invited to join in a day of prayer hosted by the Greensburg Diocesan Council of the National Council of Catholic Women (DCCW) at **Christ Our Shepherd Center** in Greensburg on **Friday, January 19**, the day of the **March for Life** in Washington D.C. The day begins with the Rosary for Priests at 11:30 am followed by Mass at Noon, Rosary for Life, Stations of the Cross for Life, Diving Mercy Chaplet at 3:00 pm, Litany for Life at 3:30 pm and closing prayer at 4:00 pm. There is no cost. Those attending can stay all day or part of the day. The DCCW will also be accepting donations of baby items for pregnancy centers in the Diocese.

The Name of the Lord
is a strong tower.
The righteous run into it,
and are safe.

PROVERBS 18-10



MASS SCHEDULE ©LPI

Saturday, December 30 -- Vigil: The Holy Family

4:00 pm-F Don Bello (Marietta Kois)
6:00 pm-M Rev. Leo J. Pleban (Family)

Sunday, December 31 -- The Holy Family

8:00 am-M Teofilio Pates (Fr. Anthony & Staff)
9:30 am-F Joan & Paul Sr. Cech (Mike/Missy Komara)
11:30 am-M Joey, Tim, Alex & Kevin (Debbie Miller)

Monday, January 1 -- Mary, Mother of God

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

Tuesday, January 2 -- Saints Basil & Gregory Nazianzen

8:00 am-F Cindy Mihalko (Helen Sofranko)

Wednesday, January 3 -- The Most Holy Name of Jesus

8:00 am-M Alicia K. Vicinelly (Dave/Vicki Berish)

Thursday, January 4 -- Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

8:00 am-F Linda Marano (Grandsons)

Friday, January 5 -- Saint John Neumann

8:00 am-M Health & Welfare of Grant Zavatchan
4:30-6:00 pm-M Adoration / Confessions

Saturday, January 6 -- Vigil: The Epiphany of the Lord

3-3:30 pm-F Confessions
4:00 pm-F Sophia Berdar (Carletta Fronczek)
5:00-5:30 pm-M Confessions
6:00 pm-M Alverda Krofcheck (Niece, Christal Oravets)

Sunday, January 7 -- The Epiphany of the Lord

8:00 am-M Irene O'Brien (Anne Horne)
9:30 am-F Pro Populo
11:30 am-M Joseph & Patricia Fedor Family



When Jesus was born into the world, He was born into a family. Today we celebrate the Holy Family, a model for us all to emulate. Do we love and respect our children as Joseph and Mary did their Son? Do we love and honor our parents as Jesus did His own? Do we nurture the bonds in our family as the Holy Family did? On this final day of the year, let us resolve to pray to the Holy Family for guidance and support, as we look to them for inspiration.

Question of the Week:

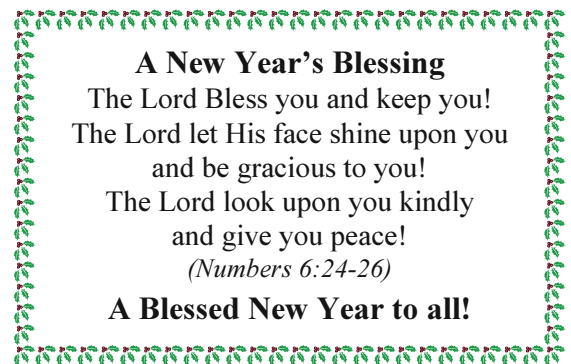
How does my faith affect the way that I treat the members of my family? How can my faith help me grow to be a better parent/sibling/son/daughter?

Prayer for the Family

Dear Lord, we lift our families to You in prayer. Bind our wounds, forgive our debts, show Your mercy! Lead us to deeper communion with each other and with You. Help us, too, to be a holy family. Amen.

Mass Readings for the Week Ahead

Monday: Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
Tuesday: 1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28
Wednesday: 1 Jn 2:29-3:6; Jn 1:29-34
Thursday: 1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42
Friday: 1 Jn 3:11-21; Jn 1:43-51
Saturday: 1 Jn 5:5-13; Mk 1:7-11
Next Sunday: Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-6; Mt 2:1-12



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

† **Sanctuary - Peace on Earth**
† **Saint Anthony - Dolores Malik**
requested by daughter, Connie





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