

From the Pastor's Desk

Here is a great message for us to ponder in light of the violence that seems to be pervading our world today and the fear and anxiety it is causing us:

By Christmas 1863, this nation was deeply divided by civil war. The great American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, sitting in his study in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was overcome with worry and despair. Very early in the conflict he had taken a strong, uncompromising stand on abolition in his "Poems on Slavery"; but now he grieved for his country and worried about his son, a young Army lieutenant who had been wounded in battle. That December day, Longfellow scribbled these words:

***In despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."***

But as he wrote those words, Longfellow became aware of the sound of the bells pealing from a nearby church. The anxious father heard in the bells as signs of hope and assurance, as the presence of something much stronger than the malaise that gripped his soul. Longfellow began to rework the lines he had written:

***Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail, The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."***

Longfellow's words became the poem and the American Christmas carol, *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*.

In the ringing of Christmas bells announcing the birth of Mary's child, God calls to humanity in every time and place: ***I am with you every step of the way. I am with you in every storm. I am with you when the night seems unending.*** In Mary's child, the inexplicable love of God becomes real to us. In Mary's child, the peace and justice of God become possible.



Advent Yoga class on Tuesday, December 15th from 6:00PM to 7:30PM and on Saturday, December 19th from 7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m. in St. Catherine Room. A donation of \$15 is suggested, however any amount is appreciated. All class proceeds will be donated to the St. Francis Un-Trim-A-Tree Project. Class will be limited to the first 20 registrants. For more information on the **Tuesday class, please contact Rita Evans at 540-270-0667 or at breathofheavenyoga@outlook.com.** For the **Saturday class, please contact Tracy Morgan at 540-446-9426 or at spiritualyogava@gmail.com.**

Votive Candles—Envelopes are provided for the candle money. **Please place them in the Catch-All slot located in the vestibule of the church.**



Save the Date: Steve Angrisano, a popular Catholic musician and composer, will be leading a three-part music and Advent Reflection series from **December 13th-15th (starts at 7pm each night) at St. Francis.**



Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve (**NO** 8:45 a.m. Mass)

3:15 PM Children's Christmas Pageant in church
Followed by 4:00 PM Children's Mass
(Children's Choir)

4:00 P.M. – Mass in the gym (Cantor)

5:45 Prelude **6:00 PM Children's Mass**
(Children's Choir)

6:00 PM Overflow Mass in the gym

7:30 Prelude **8:00 PM Mass** (Teen Choir/Ensemble)
8:00 PM Spanish Mass in the gym

9:30 Prelude **10:30 PM Mass** (Adult Choir)

(No Mass at Midnight)

Christmas Day

8:45 Prelude **9:00 AM Mass** (Cantor)

10:30 AM Mass

11:30 Prelude **12:00 Noon Mass** (Ensemble in church)

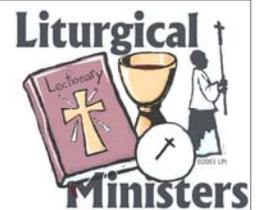
Dec. 26th

8:45 a.m. Morning Mass

If you would like to make a donation for **Christmas Memorial Flowers** envelopes are available on the tables in the vestibule. Anyone who would like to remember their loved ones can fill out the information on the envelope and drop it in the **catch-all slot on the wall in the vestibule**. Those names will be listed in the bulletin during the Christmas Season.



For all lectors, ushers, servers, and Eucharistic ministers who wish to serve during the Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day masses, the **sign-up sheets are located on the bulletin board in the vestibule.**



It is the Third Sunday of Advent.

Today we light the third candle on the Advent wreath; the Joy candle. It is also called the Shepherd's candle. Reminding us of the joy that was experienced at the coming of the birth of our Savior. No Joy? Let's talk about getting some back into your life.

Please call 703-221-4312 and then press 4 or email Kathy Walker at kwalker@stfrancis.org to get started with a Stephen Minister.

Social Justice: Franciscan Action and Advocacy (FA&A)

In place of its annual **Catholic Advocacy Day**, the **Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC)** is instead now encouraging advocates who want to meet with their legislators in Richmond to come on one of three **Catholics in the Capital Days**: Tuesday, January 26th; Thursday, February 4th; or Wednesday, February 17th (also the day of a Virginia Vespers prayer service). On any of these three dates, advocates are invited to come to VCC's Richmond offices, meet informally with their staff and receive a packet of current legislative issues and talking points. Advocates will schedule their own legislative visits. VCC's staff will assist as needed. Please stay tuned for more details.

Upcoming FA&A meetings (all are welcome!): The **V.O.I.C.E.** (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement) team here at the parish is meeting to work on community issues on **Sunday, January 3rd**, at **10 a.m.** in the **Br. Juniper Room**. Our **Respect Life Committee** (advocating for the consistent ethic of life from conception to natural death) is meeting on **Saturday, January 16th**, at **11:45 a.m.** in the **St. Catherine Room**. Our **Care for Creation Committee** (focused on environmental work/integral ecology) is meeting on **Sunday, January 17th**, at **9 a.m.** in the **St. Catherine Room**. Our **Anti-Human Trafficking Committee** (engaged in action, awareness and advocacy efforts in the fight against human trafficking) is meeting on **Wednesday, January 20th**, at **7 p.m.** in the **Grade 6 Classroom**.

As you prepare for Christmas, please also consider giving a gift for life by supporting **Gabriel Project** (pregnancy assistance) and/or **Project Rachel** (post-abortion healing ministries). To make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit www.arlingtondiocese.org/giftforlife.

For more information on any of the above and/or to get involved in justice/advocacy, please visit the FA&A section on the parish website (<http://www.stfrncis.org/welcome-introduction/>) and/or contact Rob Goraieb, O.F.S. at rgoraieb@stfrncis.org or 703-221-4978, ext. 228.

LUNCH BUNCH—All 55 + please join us for our **December lunch bunch on the 17th at 12:30 in the St. Catherine Room**. We will be assembling gift baskets for a nursing home and celebrating the Christmas season. Bring your lunch, good cheer and jolly laugh! **If you need more information or transportation, please contact Becky Traver at Tandovi@aol.com or 540-699-2175.**



Seniors on the Go!

Are You New to the Parish??? Welcome!!
Registration forms are available on the tables in the vestibule, from the parish office or from the parish website www.stfrncis.org.

St. Francis House Corner

We want to thank all the parishioners, the students from **St. Francis of School**, and **St. Francis' Cub Scout Pack 1385** who have recently helped stock the shelves of our St. Francis House food pantry with their fantastic food drives. **Great job!**



Hilda Barg Shelter
Thank you very much to the parishioners, **The Knights of Columbus, RE, Stephen Ministry, The Girl Scout Troop 2979, The Finance Council, The Hispanic Prayer Group and The Secular Franciscan Fraternity** for helping us provide food at the Hilda Barg Shelter this week. Your generosity, and continuing support through the years is truly appreciated.

Boletín Semanal

Alberge de Hilda Barg—Muchas gracias a todos los ministerios que nos dieron su apoyo ofreciendo alimentos al Alberge de Hilda Barg en especial al Grupo Hispano de Oración.

Charlas Bautismales—Las próximas charlas bautismales serán el **viernes, diciembre 18** a las 7:00pm en la librería de la escuela. Para mas información por favor llamar a la **Señora Salguero al 703-221-6344**.

Misa de Nochebuena—Los invitamos a participar de la pastorela y misa de noche buena el jueves, diciembre 24 a las 8:00pm en el gimnasio de la iglesia. Ven y acompáñanos.

No Habrá Misa en Español el Día de la Navidad—El Viernes, 25 de Diciembre no tendremos misa en español. Si usted desea asistir a misa de Navidad tendremos misas en ingles a las 9:00am, 10:30am, and 12:15pm.

Dando en Navidad—Por los últimos 15 años nuestra Iglesia San Francisco de Asís ha asistido a las familias en necesidad del área de Dumfries y Triangle con regalos de Navidad. En el vestíbulo de la iglesia encontraran dos arboles de navidad con etiquetas con información para los regalos. Si usted desea ayudar a una familia necesitada por favor tome una etiqueta, compre el regalo y devuélvalo sin empacar con la etiqueta pegada al regalo antes del miércoles, diciembre 16. Para mas información por favor llamar a **Francia al 703-221-6344**.

If you or a family member is in the **hospital or homebound**, please call the parish office if you would like a visit from one of the friars. The hospitals are not permitted to give out the names of patients, so the only way we will know if you are in the hospital is if you or a family member informs us.



Faith Formation Office

Phone: 703-221-3127 Fax: 703-221-3246
Office Hours: Monday—Thursday: **8:00 am—2:00 pm**
Friday: **8:00 am—1:00 pm**

Religious Education Calendar

We still have room in all grades if you need to register your child. Also, we are in need of **two** more Catechists for Sundays at 8:45 a.m.-10:00a.m. and 10:30a.m.-11:45 a.m. **For more information, please call the RE Office at 703-221-3127 or email recoor@stfrncis.org.**

Dec. 13 Sunday RE Sessions I&II
17 Thursday RE Session
Christmas Break—December 20th-January 3rd. RE Class resumes on Thursday, January 7th.

****Please note the change in the RE Calendar: November 15th Sunday RE was cancelled due to the Parish Thanksgiving Francis Fest. June 5th will therefore be the last day of RE for all Sunday RE classes.****

Do not be afraid of presenting Christ to someone who does not yet know him. Christ is the true answer, the most complete answer to all the questions which concern the human person and his destiny. Without Christ, the human person remains an unsolvable riddle. Therefore, have courage to present Christ! Certainly, you must do this in a way which respects each person's freedom of conscience but you must do it.

Saint John Paul II

Discovering Christ is a ministry designed to help us get to know Jesus a little bit better. Each session will begin with dinner and some time to unwind from the week and get to know each other. We will listen to presentations on topics such as: "What is the Meaning of Life?"; "What Does Jesus Want Us to Know?" and "Who is the Holy Spirit?" During the last part of the session, we will spend time talking about these topics, what they mean to us and how they relate and apply to our own lives. By sharing our experiences and insights, we will all get to know Him a little better.

Please join us for the next session which will begin meeting on **Friday, January 8th**. The meetings will take place each Friday night up to and including February 26th with a Holy Spirit retreat day on Saturday, February 13th. Please contact **Sheila Noble** at snoble@stfrncis.org if you would like to register or have any questions.

discovering
CHRIST
a seven-week experience

Follow us on:

Facebook: *St. Francis of Assisi Church*
Twitter: *@StFrancisVA*
Instagram: *stfrancischurchva*



Mark Your Calendars for the Annual Festival of Praise!

December 18th at 7:30 p.m.

Enjoy a wonderful evening of Christmas Praise presented by the combined choirs and instrumentalists of the Saint Francis Music Ministry, full of music that will stir your heart and leave you feeling joyful! After the Festival, join us in the Parish Hall for food and fellowship. The Concert is free of charge, however a free will offering will be accepted to help cover the cost of the Concert.



For more information, please contact
Nikole Giraldi at nikoleg@stfrncis.org.

Please Pray For All those who are sick: G.C. Kraus, Teddy Placek, Annelies Gendron, Steve Dowell, Gregory Dowell, Patricia Littlefield, A.A. McGill, and Michael Ryan.

Please pray for the following who are serving abroad in harm's way: Ian French, Jeffrey Miller, Jeffrey Monken, Elizabeth L. Keegan, James Moore, Kyle McVay, Kyle Traylor, Kasey Eggie, Eustaquio Castro-Mendoza, Marc Gendron, and Darryl Saungweme.

Best Advent Ever!

Mathew Kelly is returning to provide "The Best Advent Ever: Rediscover Mercy." If you liked Mathew's Best Lent Ever series, earlier this year, you will love his Advent program. This e-mail program will provide inspiring videos and spiritual coaching that will help to "transform your life, relationships, work and ability to genuinely embrace and experience life." (Dynamic Catholic) This program is free and began on **November 29th and will run through December 23, 2015**. Log on to www.dynamiccatholic.com; at the top banner click on "Catholic Moments" and scroll down to Advent & Christmas where you will find further instructions to sign up. Get the most from your Advent experience with Mathew Kelly. **For more information, please contact John Habel, at jhabel@stfrncis.org.**

Baptismal Preparation Class—Our next class will be held this **Sunday, December 13, 2015 from 1:30p.m.—2:00p.m.** in the Br. Juniper Room.

Hearing Assistance Earphones are available for those who would like sound amplification. They have been checked and are functioning well. See one of the friars or come to the sacristy before Mass.



SPONSOR OF THE WEEK

We would like to thank
Family Healthcare Chiropractic Center
for sponsoring an ad in our weekly bulletin.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Readings for the Week of December 13, 2015

Monday	Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27
Tuesday	Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Matthew 21:28-32
Wednesday	Isaiah 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25; Luke 7:18b-23
Thursday	Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17
Friday	Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25
Saturday	Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25
Sunday	Micah 5:1-4a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

CORNERSTONE

St. Francis of Assisi, Triangle, VA

Are you looking for an opportunity to examine your relationship with God, your family and others in your life? If so, then a Cornerstone retreat is what you need. These 26-hour retreats are held on separate dates for men and women. Both will be held at the San Damiano Spiritual Life Center in White Post, VA. Do not let an opportunity to reflect, renew and strengthen your faith pass you by. *Online registration begins December 13th for the men's retreat and January 4th for the women's retreat.* <http://www.stfrncis.org/cornerstone/>

Men's Cornerstone retreat: March 11th at 5:00pm—March 12th at 7:00pm (\$120 for double room and \$140 for single room).

Women's Cornerstone retreat: April 8th at 5:00pm—April 9th at 7:00pm (\$120 for double room and \$140 for single room).

Please Note: The Mass Intention book for 2016 will open on **Monday, December 14, 2015.**

To schedule a Mass you may come in or call the office. We also have envelopes located on the tables in the vestibule. Just drop the envelope in the catch-all box.

Mission 2016

Join St. Francis Parishioners in July 2016 on a journey to our Sister Parishes in Lima, Peru. Departs Sunday, July 3rd and Returns Monday, July 11th

- Applications and deposit of \$100 now being accepted. The final date for receipt of applications is Dec 31, 2015.
- Fee includes airfare, lodging, most meals and local transportation.
- Full payment (\$1,600) is due by Jan 31, 2016
- Applications are available on line at (<http://www.stfrncis.org/sister-parish-in-peru/>) and next to the Sister Parish section of the church bulletin board.

Questions? Please call: Terry Danner at 703-680-0860/
terrydanner@verizon.net **or Clarence Thompson at**
[703-680-4657/clarencethompson@verizon.net](tel:703-680-4657).



SUNDAY, 5:30 PM	December 13—Third Sunday of Advent †Audrey Proscia Betsy and Karen Dennison Fiona and Hazel Winston †Miguel and †Felicitas Castaneda
7:30 AM	†Frank Piorkowski, Sr. †Alice Piorkowski †Joseph Piorkowski †Aurora de Leon Nell †Naldo Ponsi
9:00 AM	†Ben Badami †Marie Newman †Dwayne E. Gonsorcik †Maria Coca †Naldo Ponsi
10:30 AM 12:15 PM	Souls in Purgatory †Clara Kennedy †Kathleen Raymond †Garry Frieson †Joyce and †Don McVay In Thanksgiving †Josephine Bost
1:45 PM 5:30 PM	Misa en español People of the Parish
MONDAY, 8:45 AM	December 14—St. John of the Cross †Bob Eves, Sr. †Faye Eloise Whalen
TUESDAY, 8:45 AM	December 15—Advent Weekday †Marie Werner
WEDNESDAY, 8:45 AM	December 16—Advent Weekday †David John Butts †Dwayne E. Gonsorcik
THURSDAY, 8:45 AM	December 17—Advent Weekday †May C. Mecca †Paedar Cremin
FRIDAY, 8:45 AM	December 18—Advent Weekday †Judy Carter †Ligia Lizarralde
SATURDAY, 4:00 PM 5:30 PM	December 19—Advent Weekday Sacrament of Reconciliation †Angie Santella

There is a book located in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel next to the Tabernacle for you to write your own prayers of petition. During the *Prayer of the Faithful* during weekend liturgies, an intercession will call to mind those prayers in a general way. In this manner, the public prayer of the church is bound to the many prayers of the faithful who live in the body of Christ!

