

From the Pastor's Desk

Someone asked me a question on the mercy of God the other day during the Parish Mission that is as old as religion itself: **How can an all-good God send someone to hell for all eternity?** It is a false question! God does not send anyone to hell and God does not deal out eternal punishment. God offers us life and the choice is ours as to whether we accept that life or not.

Jesus tells us that God does not judge anyone. We judge ourselves. God did not create hell and God does not send anyone to hell. But that does not mean that hell does not exist and that it is not a possibility for us. This is how Jesus explains it: God sends his life into the world and we can choose that life or reject it. We judge ourselves in the choices we make. If we choose life, we are ultimately choosing heaven. If we reject life, we end up living outside of life and that ultimately is hell. But we make the choice; God does not send us anywhere. Moreover, hell is not a punishment created by God to make us suffer. Hell is the absence of something, namely, being in relationship and connected to God. If we choose to live our lives separate from God in this life then we will be separated from God when we die which is hell but we made that choice.

Hell is real, but it is not a punishment created by God to deal out justice or vengeance. Hell is the absence of life, of love, of forgiveness, of community. We can end up there but that is a choice we make if we reject the life God offers us during our lifetime. "Hell", as the theologian John Shea once said, "is never a surprise waiting for a happy person, it is the full-flowering of a life that rejects love, forgiveness, and community."

Hell is what we experience when we choose ourselves over being in a relationship with God. Scripture tells us that God is love and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them. Lent is the time for us to look closely at our lives to see if we are abiding and growing in the Lord and if not then making the necessary changes in the choices we are making.

If you would like to make a donation for **Easter Memorial Flowers**, and remember your loved ones in this way please fill out the information on the envelope on the table in the vestibule and drop it in the catch-all slot. These names will be listed in the bulletin during the Easter Season.



Communal Reconciliation—will be held on **Wednesday, March 16th, at 6:30 p.m.** We trust this will help all who respond to have a sacred encounter with the God of mercy. There will be extra clergy on hand to assist that evening.



During Lent Mass will be celebrated at 8:45am and 12 noon Monday through Friday.

Stephen Ministers: Inspire someone today! (it is why we were commissioned) Want to know more about Stephen Ministry? Stop by and talk with **Kathy Walker**, or please call **703-221-4312** and then press 4 to talk. Or email at kwalker@stfrancis.org to learn more of what we are all about.



Schedule for Holy Week and Easter Sunday March 20th—March 27th

March 20	Palm Sunday
Regular Mass Schedule	
March 23	Wednesday
6:30-8:00 PM	Individual Confession
March 24	Holy Thursday
9:00 AM	Morning Prayer
12:00 PM	Mass
8:00 PM	Mass of the Lord's Supper La Cena del Señor: 8:00 PM en el Gimnasio
March 25	Good Friday
9:00 AM	Morning Prayer
3:00 PM	Liturgy of Good Friday
6:00 PM	Via Crucis/The Way of the Cross— Church Parking Lot
7:00 PM	Liturgy of Good Friday en español en el Gimnasio
8:00 PM	Musical Meditation on the Stations of the Cross (Presented by all of St. Francis' Choirs and Musicians)
March 26	Holy Saturday
9:00 AM	Morning Prayer / Blessing of Easter foods
8:00 PM	<i>Note: No Saturday 5:30 p.m. Mass</i> Easter Vigil
March 27	Easter Sunday
7:30 AM	Mass—Church
9:00 AM	Mass—Church
9:00 AM	Mass—in Parish Center
10:30 AM	Mass—Church
10:30 AM	Mass—in Parish Center
12:15 PM	Mass—Church
12:15 PM	Mass—in Parish Center
1:45 PM	Misa en Español

Note: No 5:30 p.m. Mass on Easter Sunday

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

Join members of our parish's Respect Life Committee to pray the **Rosary for life** this coming **Friday, March 11th**, and **Friday, March 18th**, from **11 a.m.-11:30 a.m.**, in the **church**. Please contact Rob with any questions.

The **V.O.I.C.E.** (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement) team here at the parish is meeting to work on community issues **this Sunday, March 6th**, at **10 a.m.** in the **Br. Juniper Room**.

Our **Anti-Human Trafficking Committee** (engaged in action, awareness and advocacy efforts in the fight against human trafficking) is meeting **next Wednesday, March 9th**, at **7 p.m.** in the **Grade 7 Classroom**.

Other March FA&A meetings: Our **Respect Life Committee** (advocating for the consistent ethic of life from conception to natural death) is meeting on **Saturday, March 19th**, 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, March 20th**, at **9 a.m.** in the **Br. Juniper Room**. Our **Franciscan Action and Advocacy Council (FAAC)** is meeting on **Saturday, March 19th**, at **9:30 a.m.** in the **St. Catherine Room**. (FAAC meetings are only open to council members. Parishioners are encouraged, however, to submit questions or ideas for FAAC discussion or consideration.)

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.stfrancis.org/welcome-introduction/>) and/or contact Rob Goraieb, O.F.S. at rgoraieb@stfrancis.org or 703-221-3127, ext. 228.

BE THE DIFFERENCE

THE SCHOOL YEAR STARTS MARCH 1ST IN PERU!! IT'S TIME FOR OUR ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP DRIVE. This year we have children from 3 different Catholic schools who need help with their tuition. Their needs range from \$90-\$500 for a year of schooling. This year we are adding two more opportunities to help our sister parish families. Santa Ana school is offering a badly needed after school program. Could you donate \$5 to pay for one child to have 1 month of tutoring and childcare? Any increments above that would be appreciated. The entire cost of the program, for 50 children, is only \$2,250 for the school year. Santa Ana has a highly effective micro-loan program that has benefited several groups of women to start or enhance new businesses. This year we would like to supplement this fund so that they can increase the number of loans. You will find marked envelopes for all these donations on the bulletin board. Please be sure to return them by **March 6th**. See the bulletin board and/or website for more information or call **Sharon Danner at 703-680-0860**.

St. Francis House Corner

Thanks to the donations from all our parishioners we were able to provide food for **65** families this week. At this moment we are in need of **cereal** and **reusable bags (no paper bags)**. For more information about the St.



Francis House Food Pantry, please call Francia at 703-221-6344. Thank you for your continuing support.

When Did I see You Hungry, Lord?

St. Francis has pledged to provide Saturday dinners during the winter months at the Winter Shelter and **we need your help**. Sign-up sheets are available on the bulletin board in the vestibule. For more information please contact Francia at 703-221-6344 or calisa3@verizon.net.

Boletín Semanal

Charlas Bautismales—Las próximas charlas bautismales serán el **viernes, marzo 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**.

Despensa de Comida de La Casa de San Francis—gradecemos a todos nuestros parroquianos por todas sus ofrendas a la Despensa de Comida; con sus donaciones pudimos ayudar a **65** familias. En estos momentos estamos necesitados de **cereal y bolsas reusables**. **Muchas gracias por sus donaciones.**

Quando te vi con hambre, Señor?—San Francis se ha comprometido a proveer cenas para el albergue todos los sábados. Necesitamos su ayuda. Para mas información por favor llamar a **Francia al 703-221-6344** o escribirle a su correo electrónico calisa3@verizon.net o firmarse en las hojas que están en el vestíbulo de la iglesia.

Sopa y Las Estaciones (Vía Crucis)—Los viernes durante el tiempo de Cuaresma estaremos celebrando "Sopa y las Estaciones" empezando el **12 de febrero a las 6:00pm** con una cena de sopa y pan en el comedor del Centro Parroquial seguido por las estaciones en español a las 8:00pm en la iglesia. Los esperamos a que se una con nosotros en este tiempo de comunión y de oración.

Servicio Penitencial—El **miércoles, Marzo 16 de 6:30-8:00pm** tendremos en nuestra parroquia el Servicio Penitencial, oportunidad para reflexionar en la palabra de Dios, examinar nuestra conciencia y confesar nuestros pecados.

Horario de Confesiones durante el tiempo de Cuaresma—Las confesiones serán escuchadas todos los viernes de 8:00-9:00pm.

Sacramentos para Adultos—Cualquier adulto que desee celebrar algún Sacramento por favor contactar al **Padre John Heffernan al 703-864-2053**. El Padre John se encuentra de viaje en estos momentos y regresara en marzo 10. por favor llamarlo después de esta fecha.

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

Religious Education has a New Website Page! Parents please check out the new Parish website at stfrancis.org. Religious Education has a new page along with some new added features. We have a Parent Blog with insightful articles and we are on Pinterest! Please feel free to email me with Catholic resources that you have found helpful.

Email Marianne Hayes, DRE at recoor@stfrancis.org

Feb. 28 Sunday RE Sessions I&II
Mar. 3 Thursday RE Session
6 Sunday RE Sessions I&II
10 Thursday RE Session
13 Sunday RE Sessions I&II
17 Thursday RE Session

March 29—April 3rd NO RE, Easter Break. Classes will resume on April 7th.

HUNGERING FOR THE JOURNEY

Join our parish community—and nearly 14,000 Catholic communities across the United States—in a life-changing Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl. All RE students and SFAS students were given a Rice Bowl. Please have your family participate in this wonderful act of mercy. If you give up a meal or the movies have your child donate to the Rice Bowl and do not forget to download the CRS Rice Bowl app! Remember, what you give up for Lent changes lives! For more information contact Marianne Hayes, DRE recoor@stfrancis.org



Please Pray For All those who are sick: Norma Eure, Celine Nebbia, Fran Phoenix, Michael Breeding, and Richard Hamner.

And for those recently deceased: Craig Weirich; and Bill Skillman.

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

ST. FRANCIS MEN'S GROUP—Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 8th 2016 at 7:30PM in the Br. Juniper Room—Our topic will be Chapters 3 and 4 of Pope Francis' recent encyclical on the care of creation—Laudato Si'. This document as well as the study guide which we will be using is available on the parish website at: <http://www.stfrancis.org/environmentintegral-ecology/>. All men of the parish are welcome. For more information please contact Tony Mercogliano at amercogliano@gmail.com or 571-332-7048.



SAVE THE DATE
St. Francis of Assisi School PTO
Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction

Saturday, April 30, 2016

Immediately following 5:30pm Mass



2016 Bishop's Lenten Appeal Go forth as heralds of God's mercy

The Bishop's Lenten Appeal is in full swing and we are asking every household in our parish to support this appeal to the extent that they are able. The BLA funds many programs, services and ministries that serve people in need and further Jesus' Mission in our diocese. During this Jubilee Year of Mercy, let's join together to do the Lord's work—works that touch the lives and souls of thousands of people in our diocese. Thank you!

John Paul OPEN HOUSE

The Spring Preview Open House on Thursday, March 17th, from 4 – 6pm, is primarily for younger students who wish to preview high school, but all are welcome to attend! A brief presentation will begin at 4:15pm. Meet Students, teachers, and parents, and enjoy green treats in honor of St. Patrick! For more information and to register, please visit www.jpthegreat.org or call 703-445-0314.



Soup and Stations—Fridays during Lent we will celebrate Soup and Stations beginning at 6:00 pm with a soup and bread dinner in the Parish Center Dining Facility followed by the Stations of the Cross in the church at 7:00 pm. Each week a different group will sponsor the dinner and St. Francis Lectors will lead the Stations that evening. Please join us in this time of fellowship and prayer.



Confession Schedule for Lent

Confessions will be heard every Wednesday during Lent from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm.
In addition to Saturday's from 4—5pm.

Baptismal Preparation Class—Our next class will be held on Sunday, March 13, 2016 from 1:30p.m.—2:00p.m. in the Br. Juniper Room. Please call the parish office to register at 703-221-4044.

SPONSOR OF THE WEEK

We would like to thank
The Enchanted Florist
for sponsoring an ad in our weekly bulletin.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY,	March 6—4th Sunday of Lent
5:30 PM	Ryan Staten †Virginia Elisabetta Timpano †Jean Stanley †Brenda Escano
7:30 AM	†Judy Cloy †Lee Dixon †Denny Larsen
9:00 AM	†Dwayne E. Gonsorcik
10:30 AM	People of the Parish
12:15 PM	†Clara Kennedy The Mandina Family
1:45 PM	Misa en español
5:30 PM	†Elizabeth Benedetti
MONDAY,	March 7—Lenten Weekday
8:45 AM	
12:00 PM	
TUESDAY,	March 8—Lenten Weekday
8:45 AM	†Cleo Sally Lyle †Jan Forbes Sharon O'Brien
12:00 PM	
WEDNESDAY,	March 9—Lenten Weekday
8:45 AM	†Dwayne E. Gonsorcik Kathryn Gonsorcik
12:00 PM	
THURSDAY,	March 10—Lenten Weekday
8:45 AM	Aida Elena Pou-Roig
12:00 PM	
FRIDAY,	March 11—Lenten Weekday
8:45 AM	
12:00 PM	
SATURDAY,	March 12—Lenten Weekday
4:00 PM	Sacrament of Reconciliation
Mass Intentions on Sunday, March 6, 2016	
5:30 PM	†Joan O'Connor-Weber †Jerry and †Connie O'Shea †Juanito Malapit †Jean Stanley †Clara Caine
7:30 AM	†Judy Cloy Kathleen Chipps
9:00 AM	†Michael Houska †Dwayne E. Gonsorcik
10:30 AM	†Lorenzo Gaglio
12:15 PM	†Joyce and †Don McVay †George Beck †Clara Kennedy
1:45 PM	Misa en español
5:30 PM	People of the Parish

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Readings for the Week of March 6, 2016

Monday	Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54
Tuesday	Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16
Wednesday	Isaiah 49:8-15; John 5:17-30
Thursday	Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47
Friday	Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Saturday	Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53
Sunday	Isaiah 43:16-21; Philippians 3:8-14; John 8:1-11

The **Rosary Guild** meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Please join us **Tuesday, March 8th** from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the **St. Clare Room**. All are welcome. For more information, please call **Otella Creegan at 703-221-4692**.



The **VIRTUS Protecting God's Children** is the adult safe-environment program being offered by the Diocese of Arlington. **The Diocese requires all adult employees and also volunteers who have substantial contact with children to attend the seminar. This includes:**

- ⇒ Vacation Bible School volunteers
- ⇒ Nursery volunteers
- ⇒ Confirmation retreat parent volunteers
- ⇒ School parent volunteers, who chaperone field trips, volunteer in the classroom, etc.
- ⇒ Mommy & Me volunteers
- ⇒ Coaches for all sports
- ⇒ Boy Scout/Girl Scout leaders and assistants (regardless of whether they are parishioners)
- ⇒ Catechists and Assistant Catechists
- ⇒ CYM and MSYM volunteers
- ⇒ All church and school employees

St. Francis of Assisi Parish will host a seminar on Saturday, April 9th from 10 am—2 pm in the Parish Center Dining Facility (begins promptly at 10 am). To attend this workshop you must pre-register with your full legal name. The seminar is limited to 60 people, but there are a number of seminars offered throughout the Diocese; please check availability on the VIRTUS website.



To register: Go to www.virtus.org and click on the yellow link labeled "Registration" (you may either view a list of sessions or begin the registration process). To register for a specific session, select "Begin the Registration Process". Then, from the pull-down menu, select "Diocese of Arlington, VA". Then follow the online prompts.

Every adult member of the parish is invited to register and attend the workshop—it is our duty as members of this community of faith to be aware of how we can support and protect all children.