St. Francis of Assisi Parish Family

Sharing the love of Jesus in the north Georgia mountains, and beyond….

Archdiocese of Atlanta
Deacon Larry Casey  
Deacon Paul Dietz  
Deacon J.P. McGuire – Administrator

Mass Times:
Sat: 4:30 pm - Vigil  
Sun: 8:30 am, 11:00 am  
1:00 pm (Spanish)

Deacon Paul Dietz  
Sun: 8:30 am, 11:00 am  
1:00 pm (Spanish)

Jackie Moden – Administrator

Sacrament of Reconciliation:
Sat: 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Eucharistic Adoration:
Mon. – Fri. 9:45 am – 12 noon

Finance Manager
Rita Baker

Church Office
3717 Hwy 515  
Blairsville, GA. 30512

Phone: (706) 745-6400

Office Hours: Mon – Thurs: 10:00 am – 4:30 pm

E-mail: office@stfrancisblairsville.com

Website: www.stfrancisblairsville.com
December 15, 2019

**Mass Intentions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>By</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>The People of SFA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Dick Stone</td>
<td>Nita Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>Herman Pastori</td>
<td>Elaine &amp; Dick Grenon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td>Jesus Vasquez</td>
<td>Hilara Vasquez</td>
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**WEEKLY CALENDAR Dec 15th – Dec 21st**

**Sunday Third Sunday of ADVENT**

- Angel Tree Gifts Due!
- 9:45 am Catechism Gifts Due! Lower Marian Hall
- 9:45 am Bible Chat Room 11
- 5:00 pm Youth Group Marian Hall

**Monday**

- 10:00 am Advent Prayer Conference Room
- 7:00 pm Advent Prayer Conference Room
- 7:00 pm Parish Penance Service Church

**Tuesday**

- 9:45 am Weight on the Lord Room 5
- 10:00 am Mom’s Group Room 6
- 4:00 am Choir Church

**Wednesday**

- 10:00 am Prayer Group Room 11
- 11:30 pm Womens Guild Luncheon Brasstown
- 6:00 pm Young Adults Room 7
- 6:00 pm R.C.I.A. Room 11
- 7:00 pm Spanish Prayer Group Church

**Thursday**

- 2:00 pm Koffee Klatch Marian Hall
- 4:00 pm Choir Church

**Friday**

No Activities

**Saturday**

No Activities

**Offertory Nov. 30 & Dec 1**

- First Collection $ 6,666.00
- Online Giving: $ 2,920.00
- Second Collection $ 1,197.00 – Immac. Concept.

**Readings: The Week of Dec 15th – Dec 21st**

- **Sunday- Third Sunday of Advent**
  - IS 35:1-6A, 10  JAS 5:7-10  MT 11:2-11

- **Monday the Third Week of Advent**
  - NM 24:2-7, 15-17A  MT 21:23-27

- **Tuesday the Third Week of Advent**
  - GN 49:2, 8-10  MT 1:1-17

- **Wednesday the Third Week of Advent**
  - JER 23:5-8  MT 1:18-25

- **Thursday the Third Week of Advent**
  - JGS 13:2-7  LK 1:5-25

- **Friday the Third Week of Advent**
  - IS 7:10-14  LK 1:26-38

- **Saturday- St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church**
  - SG 2:8-14  LK 1:39-45

**Prayer Requests**

- Ralph Conti
- David Drake
- Chris Seager
- Bruce & Stephanie Miller
- Ken Voss
- Ray Kelly
- Pat Smith
- Robert Hafer
- Jack Gallagher
- Buddy Mawyer
- Megan Harrell
- Bev Schutt
- Julie Waltz
- Todd Smith
- Pat Pierce
- George Ponzio
- John Engellman
- Jean Caputa
- Mary Pierson
- Fr. Gary Burkhart
- Barbara Lewis
- Elizabeth Smith
- Jeanine Visage
- Jean Hiler, ofs
- Roseanne Denchy
- Julie Waltz
- Ginny Sauer
- William McConnell
- Donald Elyard
- Irene Tisdale
- Adam Chedister
- Ray Young
- Victoria Hamel
- Bob Wilson
- Mike Brown
- Ann Jacques

Names will be removed after 30 days unless requested to remain

**Prayer for Healing**

Almighty and merciful Father, by the power of your command, drive away from them all forms of sickness and disease. Restore strength to their bodies and joy to their spirit, so that in their renewed health, they may bless and serve you, now and forevermore.
Christmas

Christmas Eve Masses
Tuesday, December 24

4:30 pm Mass – English
8:00 pm Mass – English
12:00 Midnight Mass

Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25

10:00 am Mass – English
12 noon Mass – Spanish

Church Closed after 12:00 noon Mass
No Evening Masses on Christmas Day

Thursday, December 26
9:00 am Mass of the Day

Friday, December 27
9:00 am Mass of the Day

Saturday, December 28
9:00 am Mass of the Day
3:30-4:15 pm – Confessions
4:30 pm – Vigil Mass

Schedule

Sunday, December 29
Holy Family of Jesus, Joseph & Mary

8:30 am Mass of the Day
11:00 am Mass of the Day
1:00 pm Mass of the Day – Spanish

Monday, December 30
9:00 am Mass of the Day

Tuesday, December 31
9:00 am Mass of the Day

Wednesday, January 1, 2020
Holy Day of Obligation
Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God

10:00 am Mass of the Day
12 noon Mass of the Day – Spanish
Advent Events

Ignatian Prayer for Advent
During the four weeks of Advent, we prepare for the celebration of Christ’s birth through prayer and reflection. Meet each week in Advent to learn, practice Ignatian prayer, and look for practical ways to observe the holiness of the season in our everyday lives. There is no cost for this program.

Mondays in December at 10 am - or - Mondays in December at 7 pm

Parish Penance Service

During this Season of Advent, join with our parish community for our proper preparation for Christmas by attending one of our Communion Services. We will be blessed to have priests journey to visit us in the north Georgia mountains to celebrate a solemn and sacred evening. Our Parish Penance Service will be on Monday evening, December 16th. We look forwards to having you join us then.

Parish Penance Service

St. Francis of Assisi Women’s Guild is a source of friendship, fellowship and spiritual growth for all women of the parish.

Guild members meet monthly for regular meetings. It may be a field trip, luncheon, speaker, or a fun activity. The Guild also serves the parish through various committees, which take care of funeral luncheons, altar linens, church pews and welcoming new parishioners.

One member stated that the Women’s Guild was responsible for her meeting many women in the parish. It was the springboard to wonderful friendships and an introduction to other activities in the parish and community.

All women of the parish are invited to the Christmas luncheon Wednesday, December 18, at 11:30 AM at Brasstown Valley Resort. If you’d like to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a pretty dishtowel (wrapped). Gift limit is $10.

RSVP by December 15: email, sign up at the information table, or contact Joanne at 770-377-2280, jmatricard@aol.com

Thursday at 2 pm – Marian Hall

Koffee Klatch

December 16th 7 pm – Parish Penance Service
A message from Deacon John Paul...

deaconjp@stfrancisblairsville.com
706-455-9119

Brothers and Sisters:

I hope and pray that this Advent season continues to find you eagerly awaiting the birth of Jesus, and that your reflections, place you closer and closer to the surroundings in which our Lord chose to humble Himself in the first of many, many revelations of His amazing love for us.

Also, as promised, every effort is being made to expand the transparency of what is going on at St. Francis, and your ongoing charity, and kindness in that regard, as communications expand, is truly appreciated.

To that end, we have some information to share:

1. Festival Final Results - Some parishioners have mentioned to me that they never heard the final numbers for our 2019 Fall Festival.

The parish realized a net profit of $36,707.57, from the tremendous efforts of faithful, loyal stewards who worked very hard. And while it is not the total we have become accustomed to from recent Fall Festivals, in God's providence, it is almost the same amount we just paid for our new roof that will last 26 years. Our cost for our new roof, gutters and downspouts was $38,540. Much less than what we were originally planning to spend.

Again, we thank all our dedicated parishioners who stepped up to the plate when trials befell us, and all the dedicated volunteers who made every nickel of these earnings possible. We cannot thank you enough.

And……it is never too soon to begin planning the next festival. Please pray and plan to volunteer again for our 2020 festival. Interested in being our 2020 festival chairperson? Let's talk.

2. Communication – As mentioned, we are making a concerted effort to tighten all communications in the parish. And so, going forward, as Liturgy Council, and Finance Advisory Council minutes are approved, they will be posted on the Marion Hall bulletin board in the upper hallway. They will also be posted on a Liturgy page on the parish website. Constructive comments are always welcome.

3. Saturday Confessions with Fr. Matthew – We will have Fr. Matthew join us on January 11, 2020 from 10 AM - 12 PM to hear confessions. As he is traveling a great distance, we just ask those planning to come, to sign up at the information table at the back of the church, to insure Fr. Matthew’s journey isn’t in vain.

4. Priests Scheduled – Bishop Ned has made arrangements for priests to celebrate Mass with us here at St. Francis for the months of January and February.

Finally, please take note of the Holiday Office schedule listed below. We thank our dedicated office staff for their hard work and dedication.

**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS**

For Christmas Week, the Office will be open from 10 AM-4 PM on Monday, December 23rd, and will be closed the remainder of the week.

For the week of New Year’s, the Office will be open on Monday, December 30th, from 10 AM, until 4 PM. It will be closed the remainder of the week, and will reopen on January 6th, 2020 at 10 AM.

There are no scheduled activities in Marian Hall, or in the Administrative Building while the Office is closed during this Holiday schedule.
TURNING PINK WITH JOY ON GAUDETE SUNDAY

Why is one candle not like all the others? Advent and its counterpart, Lent, are seasons of penitence. On the Advent wreath, the three purple candles mark the preparation Christians undergo while awaiting the arrival of Christ on Earth.

But, unlike dour Lent, Advent is usually a happy season, full of food, parties, shopping, music and lights. In the retail world, Christmas begins right after Halloween and then kicks into overdrive on the day after Thanksgiving. Many people mirror this, barely putting away the leftover turkey before putting up every Christmas decoration they own.

While this calendar is fine for secular society, it has nothing to do with the Child at the heart of the season. He won’t be here until Christmas Eve, and all the earlybird sales in the world won’t speed that up.

That’s why it’s traditional (though not required) to refrain from putting the Christ Child into a Catholic church’s Nativity scene manger until the appointed moment. So, why do we need a reminder to rejoice on the Third Sunday of Advent, called Gaudete Sunday (Latin for “rejoice”) by lighting a rose colored candle on our wreaths and having priests wear rose-colored vestments at Mass? Because the happiness that comes from fun and friends and a full belly is not the same thing as Christian joy.

During a Mass in May, at Casa Santa Maria in Rome, Pope Francis talked about the difference between happiness and joy:

“To be happy is good, yet joy is something more. It’s another thing, something which does not depend on external motivations, or on passing issues: it is more profound. It is a gift. “To be ‘happy at all moments, at all cost,’ can at the end turn into superficiality and shallowness. This leaves us without Christian wisdom, which makes us dumb, naïve, right? All is joy … no. Joy is something else; it is a gift from the Lord.”

If joy is a gift from the Lord, then the Lord Himself is our first and greatest gift, and the only one that will never tarnish or break or fade. Gaudete – pronounced “Gow-DAY-tay” – Sunday reminds us that the gift has not yet arrived, but it’s very near.

It takes its name from the first word of the Introit, “Gaudete in Domino Semper,” which is Latin for the introduction of Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” And it’s not just a Catholic thing. Advent wreaths are common in the Western church, including among Episcopalians, Lutherans and other mainline Christian denominations, which sometimes substitute a blue candle for the rose one (blue, though, is not a Catholic liturgical color, even though the Virgin is often portrayed in blue robes).

To continue with Philippians, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again, rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

So even though you may be having happy times during Advent, Gaudete Sunday is a moment to stop and reflect on the source of true joy. And if the Advent season has brought causes for stress and sorrow into your life, then lighting the rose candle is an opportunity to take heart and refocus on what the Mass of Christ is all about.

Perhaps you’ll have the same revelation that came upon the pinched and petulant title character of Dr. Seuss’ “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” as he stood atop Mount Crumpit with all the Who’s Christmas goodies piled high on a sleigh, ready to be dumped.

But up from Whoville, divested of all its festive finery and fine food, came not howls of anguish nor shouts of anger but the sound of sweet singing.

“And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow Stood puzzling and puzzling, ‘How could it be so? ‘It came without ribbons! It came without tags! ‘It came without packages, boxes or bags!’ And he puzzled three hours, ‘till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn’t before! ‘Maybe Christmas,’ he thought, ‘doesn’t come from a store. ‘Maybe Christmas … perhaps … means a little bit more!’”

Christ is coming. Prepare ye the way of the Lord!
Here is Your God: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Third Sunday in Advent

Readings: Isaiah 35:1–6, 10 Psalm 146:6–10 James 5:7–10 Matthew 11:2–11

John questions Jesus from prison in today’s Gospel—for his disciples’ sake and for ours.

He knows that Jesus is doing “the works of the Messiah,” foretold in today’s First Reading and Psalm. But John wants his disciples—and us—to know that the Judge is at the gate, that in Jesus our God has come to save us.

The liturgy of Advent takes us out into the desert to see and hear the marvelous works and words of God—the lame leaping like a stag, the dead raised, the good news preached to the poor (see Isaiah 29:18–20; 61:1–2).

The liturgy does this to give us courage, to strengthen our feeble hands and make firm our weak knees. Our hearts can easily become frightened and weighed down by the hardships we face. We can lose patience in our sufferings as we await the coming of the Lord.

As James advises in today’s Epistle, we should take as our example the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Jesus also points us to a prophet—holding up John as a model. John knew that life was more than food, the body more than clothing. He sought the kingdom of God first, confident that God would provide (see Matthew 6:25–34). John did not complain. He did not lose faith. Even in chains in his prison cell, he was still sending his disciples—and us—to our Savior.

We come to Him again now in the Eucharist. Already He has caused the desert to bloom, the burning sands to become springs of living water. He has opened our ears to hear the words of the sacred book, freed our tongue to fill the air with songs of thanksgiving (see Isaiah 30:18).

Once bowed down, captives to sin and death, we have been ransomed and returned to His Kingdom, crowned with everlasting joy. Raised up we now stand before His altar to meet the One who is to come: “Here is your God.”

Lecturas: Isaiás 35: 1–6, 10 Salmo 146: 6–10 Santiago 5: 7–10 Mateo 11: 2–11

Juan interroga a Jesús desde la prisión en el Evangelio de hoy, por el bien de sus discípulos y por el nuestro.

Él sabe que Jesús está haciendo "las obras del Mesías", predicho en la Primera lectura y el Salmo de hoy. Pero Juan quiere que sus discípulos, y nosotros, sepamos que el juez está en la puerta, que en Jesús nuestro Dios ha venido a salvarnos.

La liturgia del Adviento nos lleva al desierto para ver y escuchar las maravillosas obras y palabras de Dios: los cojos saltando como un ciervo, los muertos resucitados, las buenas nuevas predicadas a los pobres (ver Isaías 29: 18–20; 61:1–2).

La liturgia hace esto para darnos valor, fortalecer nuestras manos débiles y fortalecer nuestras rodillas débiles. Nuestros corazones pueden asustarse y agobiarse fácilmente por las dificultades que enfrentamos. Podemos perder la paciencia en nuestros sufrimientos mientras esperamos la venida del Señor.

Como James aconseja en la Epístola de hoy, debemos tomar como ejemplo a los profetas que hablaron en el nombre del Señor. Jesús también nos señala a un profeta, sosteniendo a Juan como modelo. John sabía que la vida era más que comida, el cuerpo más que ropa. Primero buscó el reino de Dios, confiado en que Dios proveería (véase Mateo 6:25–34). John no se quejó. No perdió la fe. Incluso encadenado en su celda de la prisión, todavía enviaba a sus discípulos, y a nosotros, a nuestro Salvador.

Venimos a Él nuevamente ahora en la Eucaristía. Ya ha causado que el desierto florezca, las arenas ardientes se conviertan en manantiales de agua viva. Él ha abierto nuestros oídos para escuchar las palabras del libro sagrado, liberó nuestra lengua para llenar el aire con canciones de acción de gracias (ver Isaías 30:18).

Una vez postrados, cautivos al pecado y a la muerte, hemos sido rescatados y regresados a Su Reino, coronados con gozo eterno. Levantados ahora estamos ante Su altar para encontrarnos con Aquel que ha de venir: “Aquí está tu Dios.”