



## **PADRE'S CORNER**

**December 25, 2016**

Saint Francis of Assisi was born in the year of 1181, and died at the age of forty-five on **October 3** in 1226. He was canonized a saint on July 16, 1228 by Pope Gregory IX. A spiritual crisis due to poor health, while disillusioned by the trappings of his family wealth and a militaristic world, he entered deeply into the spiritual world by founding the Franciscan order in 1210 and shortly later the Poor Clare nuns rooted in his friendship with Clare who also left the family palace. Francis was the inspiration for the San Damiano cross, after a visit to a country chapel, and the custom of the nativity crèche in 1220 in Greccio not far from Assisi. He used paintings and real live animals to convey the message about the birth of the Christ Child. Such images were important for conveying distinct religious messages to a mass of people, largely uneducated due to a lack of formal education.

During the recent early November parish trip to Italy, these finer points of his life were underscored. There was also the rich spiritual opportunity to pray at the tomb of Francis, and see the nearby incorrupt body of Clare. Francis put Jesus first in his life, which continues to be our modern challenge.

The sacrifice of Saint Francis is a perfect Christmas metaphor for our individual considerations at the end of 2016. The pilgrimage in Italy also discovered these other metaphors in the diverse journeys uncovered. In Florence, the statue of King David by Michelangelo (sculpted between 1501-1504) focused on a decision by David for the Lord that was likewise reflective of what Francis did. He struggled with personal weaknesses like we all do (impure impulses, greed, selfishness, hunger for power), but got smart in time to be repentant toward God's ways. Though David lived nearly 3000 years ago, his story resonates with our struggles today to find the divine plan in our life. Francis faced the same dilemma 800 years ago.

In Rome, after a papal audience with Pope Francis the morning the United States election results were made clear (we pray for a peaceful transition and transfer of power), there was the opportunity to discover another heroic figure who chose God first as did David with Francis and Clare. The remains of Peter, the first pope of the Church, were to be unearthed in the "Tomb of the Popes" under Saint Peter's Basilica. What an amazing visual to be face-to-face with the courageous human "rock" that Jesus built His Church upon.

Peter was also a flawed individual, and not just for denying Jesus three times. He struggled with stubbornness, impurity temptations against chastity, and stubborn eye problems in an era that lacked vision doctors. Yet God found a plan for Peter as He did David, Francis and Clare. The hope we can decipher from these true biblical stories is that the faith lessons also apply to each of us. We have the same faith as did precious generations of like-minded individuals, whether it be the courageous Christians preserving their beliefs in the Catacombs by fleeing enemies trying to destroy God's message or the architects of engineering miracles (church built in the face of the ruined pagan Pompeii destroyed by Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD, or the majestic churches somehow constructed on the soaring cliffs of the Amalfi Coast near Sorrento). If the message of God can remain constant and undiluted amongst the centuries, despite these imperfect human beings like we all are, then hopeful individual transformation is a quite real concept for each of us to embrace.

Christmas allows us to focus on what is essential in life, while remembering and thanking previous generations of parishioners that have lined the pews of our beautiful church since 1913 (not forgetting the Deacon Jack Seymour Food Pantry, which served as the original church and school with its inception in 1909). There is a thoughtful saying about Christmas from the website "Sun Gazing". The words read and ponder: "As we grow older our Christmas list gets smaller, and we find out that the things we really want can't be bought." We are all looking deeply and interiorally for the gifts of heaven that money and possessions cannot buy. We all want peace, harmony, integration, strong life purpose, and the presence of a precious few that really love us and care that we exist. That relentless search never completely ends. But, the Infant Saviour points to us the concrete way to satisfy that search. Merry Christmas !

**Father Bill Damroth**

## MASS INTENTIONS

### Mon. Dec. 26

7:00am Christmas Novena  
Noon Thomas Di Donato  
By Jack Earley & Nancy Remley

### Tues. Dec. 27

7:00am Andrew Joseph Michon  
By Chris  
Noon Christmas Novena

### Wed. Dec. 28

7:00am Christmas Novena  
Noon John Spear  
By George & Carol Wontz

### Thur. Dec. 29

7:00am Christmas Novena  
Noon Nicholas Stagliano Sr.  
By Nick & Helene Stagliano

### Fri. Dec. 30

7:00am Christmas Novena  
Noon Yoel Kende  
Health & Blessings  
By Liz Rich

### Sat. Dec. 31 New Year's Eve

Noon St. Francis Parish  
4:30pm Christmas Novena

### Sun. Jan. 1 New Year's Day

8:00am St. Francis Parish  
11:00am St. Francis Parish



### WEEKLY COLLECTON

December 17-18, 2016  
1<sup>st</sup> Collection \$6,725.00  
2<sup>nd</sup> Collection \$1,807.00  
TOTAL \$8,532.00

*Our sincere thanks for your generosity  
and support of our Parish.  
God bless each and every one of you....always*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> collection this weekend is for  
**CHRISTMAS DONATION**

### MASS ATTENDANCE

December 17-18, 2016  
4:30pm 103  
8:00am 167  
11:00am 240  
Total 510

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy  
is recited on Sundays  
at 10:40am before the 11:00am MASS



Our **Holy Hour** with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesday from 5:00pm to 6:00pm will be for the special intention of **Vocations**.

### Adult Catechisis

Any adult who has not received their sacraments and would like to do so, please see Sr. Laura or leave your name at the Rectory, 561-1317.



*God became man  
not so that he might be with us,  
but so that we might be with him*  
Adrian Nocent OSB

### SPANISH MASS

Our next scheduled Spanish Mass will be celebrated on January 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm.  
All are welcome!

### SPAIN PILGRIMAGE

**Last Call.....**time is getting short to make your reservation for the Spring Pilgrimage to Spain with visits to Fatima, Lourdes, Lisbon, Salamanca, Avila, Madrid, Montserrat and Barcelona. **Reservations with deposits are due this month.** Please call the rectory at 561-1317 for details.

### HELP WANTED

The Sisters of the Presentation seek to fill a part-time **Housekeeping/Nurse's Aide** position for a convent for retired Religious Sisters in New Windsor, NY beginning in January 2017. The qualified candidate will work Sunday-Thursday, approximately 30 hours per week. Benefits included. If interested, please send a resume to Sr. Margaret Murphy via fax at 845-564-0597 or via e-mail to [mmpbvm@gmail.com](mailto:mmpbvm@gmail.com).



### PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Vincenza Secor, Aaron Stagliano, Kelly Stafford, Robyn McGraw, John Sabo, Andrew Costanzo, Marie Wiejak, Rose, Stephen Sabo, Ashley Barco, Tom Scalzo, Nora Brickter, Gary Lake, Genevieve Pilch, Agnes Casey, Brianna Barker, Keith Webber, Jake Bryan DeStefano, Rose Marie Michalowski, Meryl Chatham, Vincenturia Cullen, Amy Meyer, Vinnie Yonnone, Grace Keller Peacock, Mary Corwin, Jean DeCicco, Don Hughes, David Jennings, Robert Johnson, Karen Wells, Marcia McKay, Victoria Palkovic, Elaine Pietrzak, Maureen Luzzi, Joyce Poponiak, Corrine Gammino, George Vecchio, Jr, Carol Brown, Teresa Centeno, Matthew Gallagher, Luzia Araujo, Celio Thomaz, Sherry Collins, Rosalie Nogay, Richard and Rina Bozzone, Antonio Troia, Cody Favoino Finkbeiner, Marie Louis, Sacha Samuel George, the Koch Family, Frank Pietrzak, John Marullo, Rose Jurik, Robert & Helen Osborn, Manuel DiNapoli, Jennie Serrano, Eddie Koza, Barbara Woloszyn, Gary McGraw, Rachael Neugebauer, Patricia Denniston, Arlene Dietrichsen, Maureen Kelly, Abigail Ryan, Debra Thurston, Toby Persico, Alexis Johnson, Barry Johnson, James R. Purpura, Bob Smith, Tom Kingery, Bud Smith, Amy Finnegan, Jane Pustola, Justin, Peter, Rita, Janice Ruggiero, Angela, Wayne, Abbie K., Dominick Denisi, Sebastian Denisi, Pam Denisi, Linda Hummel, Joseph Michalowski, Joann Quicksell, Frances Dolan, Daniel D'Elicio, Fr. Fred Kempferi, Carmen De Crosta, Parker, Jane Holloway, Dore Williams, Sheryl McGrath, Michelle Ryan, Rosalind Morrison, Donna Delconte, Joan Ponesse, Jim Taylor, Marilyn Lennox, Bruno Marchatta, Anne McClellan, Louis Arbia, Dottie Rodriguez, Michael Rosenberg, Maureen Sullivan, Frank D'amario



### NEEDED

#### **BROWN GROCERY BAGS WITH HANDLES**

**MARY'S HOPE** an outreach program, run by Suzanna Campora, delivers bags of groceries to shut-ins twice a month.

They are in need of used **brown paper grocery bags with handles** (like Adams) for their deliveries. If you have any to donate please drop them off at them at the rectory or leave them at the back of the church. Please mark them for *Mary's Hope*.



**Food Pantry Hours:**  
Friday 9:00am to 12noon  
Saturday 9:00am to 12noon

In your goodness please bring **PERSONAL CARE ITEMS – TOOTHPASTE, SOAP, DEODORANT, ETC.** to Church next weekend to be distributed to the less fortunate thru our Food Pantry.

**The Food Pantry will be CLOSED December 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>**  
in observance of the  
New Year holiday.

## Thank You

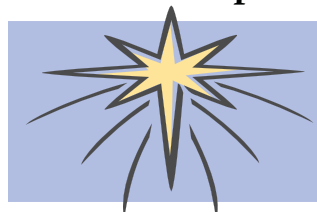
**THANK YOU** to all who participated in the *Giving Tree* project. All of the Food Pantry children received a gift from you for Christmas. Thank you again for being so generous to our less fortunate families. They are blessed by your donations.

## Thank You!

Sr. Virginia and the Women's Craft Project from Newburgh Ministry want to thank Fr. Bill and the parishioners of St. Francis for a very successful sale last weekend. More than \$400 worth of jewelry was sold! Thank you, too, to all who made financial donations. Your generosity is truly appreciated. God bless you all!

**May we be in this world a ray of that light which shone forth from Bethlehem, bringing joy and peace to the hearts of all men and women."**

Pope Francis





## CHRISTMAS BELLS

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along  
The Unbroken song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way  
The world revolved from night to day,  
A voice, a chime,  
A chant sublime  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men.

Then from each black, accursed mouth,  
The cannon thundered in the South,  
And with the sound  
The Carols drowned  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And 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!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead: nor doth he sleep!  
The Wrong shall fall,  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



## THE LEGEND OF THE HOLLY

*When Christ was born in Bethlehem  
On that first Christmas night,  
A barren bush outside the stable  
Blossomed full and bright.  
It bore a grim reminder  
Of the crown He'd one day wear;  
Its prickly leaves foretold the thorns  
Of sorrow He would bear.  
Amidst the green there grew strange fruit,  
Small berries scarlet red,  
As crimson as the blood  
Our loving Savior was to shed.  
In honor of the Prince of Peace,  
A flower pure and white,  
Bloomed sweetly when the Lord was born  
That holy Christmas night.*

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### BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR PARISH TODAY

\_\_ YES! I want to register as a member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish and receive offertory envelopes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out and drop in the Offertory Collection or mail to St. Francis of Assisi Church, 145 Benkard Avenue, Newburgh, NY 12550.....and *Welcome!*




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