



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH

4th Sunday in Advent
23 December 2018
& Christmas Day

St. Francis Xavier, Acushnet – Diocese of Fall River

Mass Schedule

(December 22nd - December 30th)

Sat.	Dec 22 4:00pm	4th Sunday in Advent (Vigil) (Ro) Ceasar Fernandes & Mr. & Mrs. Jose De Sousa
Sun.	Dec 23 8:00am 10:30am	4th Sunday in Advent (Ro) Jenny Oliver <i>Pro Populo</i>
Mon.	Dec 24 9:00am	Late Advent Weekday (Vi) Virginia M. Gill & Concannon Family
Mon.	Dec 24 4:00pm 6:30pm	Nativity of the Lord (Vigil) (Wh) Rose & John Engel Deceased Parishioners
Tues.	Dec 25 12:00am 8:00am 10:30am	Nativity of the Lord (Wh) Joseph Mello & Aldo De Rossi Intentions of Bishop da Cunha Intentions of the Holy Father
Wed.	Dec 26 9:00am	St. Stephen; First Martyr (Rd) Armand Lagasse
Thurs.	Dec 27 9:00am	St. John; Apostle (Wh) Marc Bouchard
Fri.	Dec 28 9:00am	The Holy Innocents; Martyrs (Rd) Anastasia Hammarquist
Sat.	Dec 29 9:00am	St. Thomas Becket; Martyr (Wh) Gladys & Lowell Reed
Sat.	Dec 29 4:00pm	The Holy Family (Vigil) (Wh) <i>Pro Populo</i>
Sun.	Dec 30 8:00am 10:30am	The Holy Family (Wh) Raymond Lemieux Antonio, Ana Resendes & Children

Financial Report

Due to the early bulletin submission deadline, regarding the approaching Christmas holiday, we are not able to provide the most recent collection information.

Prayers Please

... for all the sick of our parish: those homebound, in the hospital, and nursing facilities; and for all the souls in purgatory.

Sanctuary Lamp

If you are interested in this weekly memorial, please contact the parish office. *During Eucharistic Adoration please pray for the following person/s for whose intention the Sanctuary Candle burns this week: Jenny Oliver*

CONFESSIONS

Monday: 5:30 to 6:30pm
Saturday: 9:30 to 10:00am
Saturday: 3:00 to 3:45pm

FROM FR. WILLIAMS

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

As we approach the end of one year and look forward to that which comes, it is a good time to take stock of where we are. In particular, as we sing the Psalm response this weekend, “let us see your face and we shall be saved,” I think of a few examples in which I have encountered the face of the Lord revealed through the actions of our community in these last twelve months:

- I saw the face of the Lord as so many of our young people received the sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time, and others were confirmed; many others attend our parish school & religious education program. We believe that the desire for God is already a sign of His grace present in our lives, and so to see these young people growing in the love and knowledge of God is a special sign of His presence among us.

- Along those lines, I saw the face of God in the persons of those participating in the teaching of the faith – both in our parish school and in our religious education program. The constant dedication of our school faculty & teachers to the mission of the Church is a constant sign of God’s presence, as is the faithfulness of our catechists.

- I saw the face of God revealed in the service and care given to the sick and needy carried out by the members of our St. Vincent de Paul Society and by those who bring Holy Communion to the homebound.

- I saw the face of God in the parents who faithfully bring their children to Mass. I know it’s not easy, but I see how you are taking seriously your role as the primary teachers of the faith, and are giving your children the most important example you can by making God a priority in your family life.

- I see the face of God in the countless people who give of themselves to build up our parish community – from the various committees who organize the different aspects of parish life, to the volunteers who decorate, sing in the choir, clean the church and set up for Mass – each using the gifts God has given them for the benefit of all.

- While I could go on naming many more ministries, I must also acknowledge how I see the face of God revealed in many “unorganized” ways – in your small acts of kindness, service, and sacrifice; in your faithfulness at Mass and devotions; in your dedication to Eucharistic Adoration. As I said at the beginning of this list, we believe that the desire to serve God is the result of grace – meaning that God is already present in our lives. As we have shown forth His face in 2018, may we continue to do so in 2019!

PARISH INFORMATION

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Fri: 9:30am – 4:00pm

Please make an appointment to meet with

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Religious Education: 508-998-7445

School: 508-995-4313

School Fax: 508-995-0456

ACCESSIBILITY

- Open for Prayer Every Day
- Wheelchair Lift
- Cry-room

St. Francis Xavier Parish **125 Main Street** **Acushnet, MA 02743**

tel: (508)-995-7600 fax: (508) -995-1794

email: info@sfxparish.com

Fr. Riley J. Williams, Administrator

[rjw@sfxparish.com]

Deacon David Pepin

[dbp@sfxparish.com]

Mr. Steven Guillotte, Director of Pastoral Services

[sng@sfxparish.com]

Mrs. Michelle Russo, Principal

[mrusso@sfxacushnet.com]

Mrs. Anabela Shaughnessy, Asst. Principal

[ashaughnessy@sfxacushnet.com]

Mrs. Janine Hammarquist, Rel. Ed. Coordinator

[jlh@sfxparish.com]

HOLY MASS

Monday-Sat 9:00am

Third Thursday (Latin/Extraordinary Form) 5:30pm

First Friday 9:00am & 6:00pm

Saturday Vigil 4:00pm

Sunday 8:00am & 10:30am

CONFESSIONS

Monday 5:30-6:30pm

Saturday 9:30-10:00am

Saturday 3:00-3:45pm

First Fridays 6:45-7:15pm

Any Time by Appointment

ADORATION

Mon - Friday 9:30am-9:00pm

Saturday 9:30am-2:45pm

VESPERS

Monday: Vespers with Benediction

Tuesday: Vespers

Wednesday: Vespers with Benediction

(Vespers begins at 6:30 pm)

ON THE COVER

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. (Lk 2:15-16)

There are few images more endearing to the Christian faith than the scene known as the Adoration of the Shepherds. It is a scene perhaps less noble yet more charming than the Adoration of the Magi. While the kings travelled many miles in caravan from foreign lands following a star to offer homage, the shepherds were keeping night-watch over the sheep when angels announced to them the birth of the Messiah. The magi were prosperous gentiles; the shepherds were rustic Jews such that the angelic message - "*for today in the city of David a savior has been born for you*" - certainly had its full, intended effect. The magi followed a bright star that perhaps could be seen by day; the shepherds were custodians of the night, guardians in the darkness called forth into the glorious light. In Catholic art, the biblical narrative of the shepherds adoring the new born Jesus is most often shown at night so that the light in the image is Jesus Himself.

For this 4th Sunday in Advent and for our 2018 celebration of Christmas we are using for our reflection a quotation taken from the Christmas Mass at dawn. To properly emphasize these words from Sacred Scripture we have chosen to adorn our bulletin cover with a work by the eclectic painter **Anton Raphael Mengs** entitled (of course) *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (1770).

Mengs is a very interesting character. He was born of a Danish, Jewish father in German Bohemia and raised in the Jewish faith. His father took him to Rome when he was thirteen years old and only three years later he returned to Saxony to become a court painter at the age of sixteen. On his second visit to Rome, Mengs married a peasant girl who had once posed for his paintings. He married her after converting to Catholicism. He became the director of the Vatican school of painting. Upon his death he was buried in a Catholic Church in Rome dedicated nationally to the Netherlands. He was the father to twenty children.

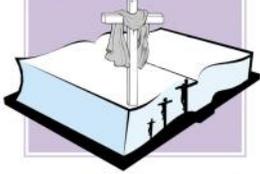
In our beautiful image we see the confluence of many styles: the exuberant color of the Baroque, the theatrical energy of Rococo, the contrasting light of Tenebrism, and the introduction of forms later to be associated with the Neoclassicism style founded by Mengs. Mengs also unites the three orders of being: the preternatural (the angels), the supernatural (the God-made-man) and the natural indicated by the many human images, but also by the single canine - representative of the celebration of all God's creation.

Angels incense above in the liturgy of heaven; one angel holds an olive branch while pointing in the direction of the earth. On earth the peaceful light of the Christ Child is surrounded by hands of praise forming the four points of the compass (Joseph's hand being "south") indicating the far reaching vitality of the moment. Mengs has painted both a divine and bucolic scene.

May your hearts be filled with the joy and wonder of the adoring shepherds! Blessed Christmas!

4th Sunday in Advent - December 23, 2018

Religious Education



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:
On all Monday evenings 7:30-8:30pm. Every grade level will have a scheduled hour of Adoration from October-May. **January is Level 5.** All students in that grade level should make every attempt to join us for this hour. There will be no adoration on Dec 24th or 31st.

No classes Sunday December 23 & Sunday December 30
Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year.

Classes resume on Sunday January 6, 2019

To keep informed of important dates please visit our
Parish Master Calendar on our website at
www.sfxparish.com. you have any questions please
email Mrs. Hammarquist at jlh@sfxparish.com

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
PRESCHOOL - GRADE 8



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ACUSHNET, MASSACHUSETTS

On behalf of our faculty, staff and students, a very Merry Christmas to all of our parishioners! We finished out our Advent season at school with parties, presents, and a performance that brought the house down! Collectively these festivities created a level of excitement in our students that needed to be released at their homes (just in time for a vacation)! Our faculty and students are thrilled with the respite and plan to return refreshed and ready to welcome in the New Year. Please continue to pray for our school during our break so we will return rested and eager to continue our studies and our daily efforts to seek the face of Christ. God bless you and our families during this joyous season!

God Bless, Michelle Russo/Principal

"For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace." (Is 9:5)

TOWER DONATIONS: Thank you to all who have donated thus far to the replacement of our bell tower roof and waterproof underlay. Your generosity will help us to complete this project with less stress on our savings account.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

December 25th - Christmas Day Collection
January 1st - Solemnity of Mary
January 6th - Building Fund



The Visitation
Mariotto Albertinelli (1503)

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice ... "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." (Lk 1:41-42)

SFX PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday	December 23
No Religious Ed	
Monday	December 24
Office Closed	
Tuesday	December 25
Office Closed	
Wednesday	December 26

READINGS FOR WEEK OF DECEMBER 23, 2018

Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-18 [4]/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45
Monday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 [2]/Lk 1:67-79
Tuesday: **Vigil:** Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 [2a]/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25
Midnight: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 [Lk 2:11]/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14
Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20
Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 [3c]/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14
Wednesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 [6]/Mt 10:17-22
Thursday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 [12]/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Friday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8 [7]/Mt 2:13-18
Saturday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 [11a]/Lk 2:22-35

SFX PRAYER LINE

Please call 508-850-6649 between 8am & 8pm
Or email your prayer request to:
sfxprayerline@gmail.com

Women of Grace



Please pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe for the protection of all life. Consider *lighting a candle (\$3)* in the Pro-Life room (near elevator) in front of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe for your intentions, the prayer room is open during the week until 4pm..

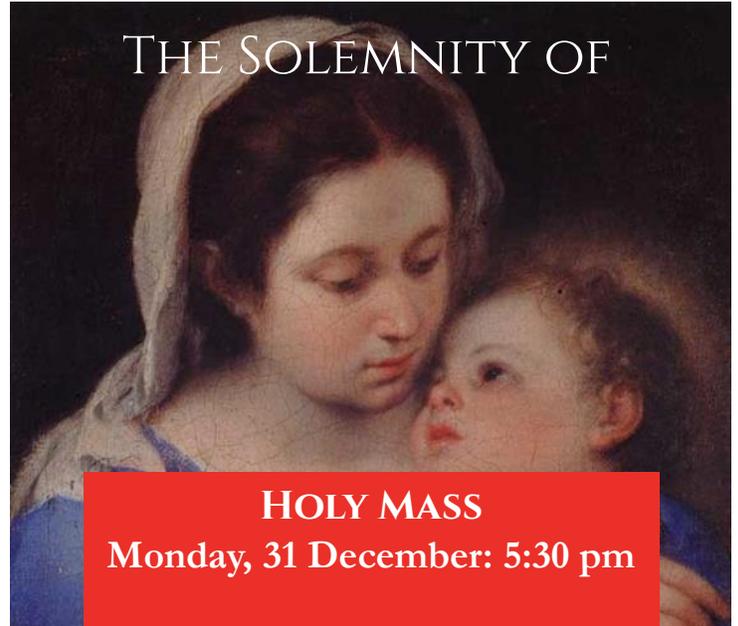


CHRISTMAS OCTAVE: The eight days following Christmas (including Christmas Day) are like solemnities, very high feast days that Catholics hold dear and which lead them to special prayer - especially Holy Mass. White is the color of the octave and so white vestments are worn except for two high feasts woven into the octave: the feast of St. Stephen and the feast of the Holy Innocents. On these days, red is the vestment color to commemorate the first post-Resurrection martyr and some of the very last proto-martyrs. These feast days occur respectively on Wednesday, 26 December and Friday, 28 December. If you have the mornings off please come to Mass during the octave, the beautiful opening of the Christmas Season. *“Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests!”* (Lk 2:14).

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS ADORATION & EVENING PRAYER SCHEDULE: For Christmas we will suspend Eucharistic Adoration beginning on Saturday, 22 Dec before the 4 pm Mass (per usual) resuming Adoration on Thursday, 27 December after the 9 am Mass (since that is the day the parish office opens again). Please note that there will be no Vespers & Benediction on December 24 - December 26 (Monday - Wednesday). For New Year's, Eucharistic Adoration will be suspended beginning on Saturday 28, December (before the 4 pm Mass) with resumption on Wednesday, 2 January after the 9 am Mass. Please note also that there will be no Vespers & Benediction on January 1st and January 2nd (Monday and Tuesday), however, Vespers and Benediction will be held at the usual time on Wednesday, January 3rd. Please note that the **Christmas season runs through January 12th**, so please avail yourselves of attendance at Holy Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and Christmas Evening Prayer.

NEW YEAR HOLY DAY: Catholics give Mary the illustrious title of *“The Mother of God”* (in Greek, *Theotokos*). We do so simply because Jesus is the Son of God and Mary is His mother. She is not mother of only the human Christ as if you could split him in two! Jesus is a divine person, forever, (the second-named, divine person of the Holy Trinity) and remains a divine person in His Incarnation and conception in the womb of Mary. Thus, Mary was the mother of the integral Jesus, the full and complete mother of the divine person, Jesus Christ. To say that Mary is not the Mother of God would be to say that Jesus is half man and half God, but the Church teaches that he is true God and true man. *Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us!*

THE SOLEMNITY OF



HOLY MASS

Monday, 31 December: 5:30 pm



MERRY CHRISTMAS: Your St. Vincent de Paul Society wishes all parishioners a very merry Christmas! Thank you for all your support in our Christmas endeavors this year, especially in our Gifts to Give campaign and our annual Giving Tree which gladdens the hearts of so many. Thanks also to the parish school for their support of local families who might not have had Christmas gifts this year without your generous support.

Most of all thank you for your prayers for the homebound and the poor. Our apostolate would be flat without the uplifting Spirit which comes with your many prayers.

THANK YOU: to all who contributed to the beautiful celebration of our Christmas liturgies. Thank you to our cantor and organist, our choir and lectors, and our sacristans and altar servers. Special thanks to **Louise Hebert** who leads the beautification of our church and to **Michael Hammarquist** and our Men of St. Joseph for setting up the outdoor Nativity scene.

4th Sunday in Advent - December 23, 2018

IDEAS FOR PRAYER

BY DOM HUBERT VAN ZELLER

In direction and reading there is nothing more vital than flexibility. By the way people talk on these two subjects one would think that the sole value attaching to them was the tenacity with which they are held onto after their usefulness has been proved. If a particular director is making a man scrupulous, or if a particular course of reading is turning into a theological study, the sooner a change is made the better.

On an earlier page we have seen how easy it is to go off at a tangent, to mistake the means for the end. This is nowhere better illustrated than by the way in which well-intentioned people can let their spiritual reading replace prayer and their director replace God.

Neither reading nor direction is intended to be primarily a penance. Each requires discipline, and at times may be mortifying, but both look to development rather than to correction. The discipline in reading excludes satisfying the obligation by frittering the time away with parish magazines, pious novels, beguiling pamphlets. The discipline to be observed in seeking direction lies in seeking only direction and not comfort or relaxation. Directors can be plagued by those who waste their time with endless stories soliciting pity and airing grievances.

NEW YEAR OFFICE CLOSINGS: This year New Years Day falls on a Tuesday. The parish office will be closed on the Monday (the day before New Years) and will not reopen until Wednesday, 2 January. We ask that you please complete any parish business with the office before or after these dates.

This time of the year is a very holy and reflective time and so it is important that our pastor and parish staff, which works hard all year putting in many extra hours even outside the office, is allowed the time to refresh and spend time in prayer and with their families and friends.

We thank you for your understanding and wish you all a very blessed New Year!

SHOES FOR RWANDA: This weekend will be *the last weekend* that we take donations for our Annual Shoe Drive for children in a Rwandan village. After the Masses on Dec. 23rd a donation of \$20 will buy a pair of shoes for a needy Rwandan child. You may donate shoes in memory of a loved one and Father Leonard will remember this person (and all who donate) at Holy Mass! Women of Grace volunteers will take the names of those you would like prayed for when you make your donation toward the shoes. Thank you for your generous support of this project.

INFORMATION ON THE PERMANENT DIACONATE: can be obtained on January 17th from 7 to 9 pm at Holy Name of the Sacred Heart Church in New Bedford. At that time qualified men are invited to submit a preliminary application. Please call 508 990 0341 for more information.

MASS INTENTIONS: Our Mass Book will open again on **Wednesday, 9 January** after the 9am Mass. At that time we will be taking intentions for the period of **July 1st to December 31st, 2019**. If you are unable to come to the parish that morning, please call the parish office on or after January 9th and we can assist you over the telephone; *we will not be taking intentions for this second half of 2019 prior to the 9th*. (Please note that we can also accommodate Masses offered in Rome for your loved ones during the year of 2019).

As in the past, there will be on January 9th the usual procedure of standing in line to reserve 3 Mass Intentions and returning to the back of the line (if one desires) for no more than 2 more, bringing the maximum to 5 Masses that can be scheduled that day. This allows us to keep the line moving and provides fairness to all those seeking Mass intentions. Thank you for your cooperation.

DIOCESAN STRATEGIC PLANNING: As part of the **Rebuilding in Faith and Hope** initiative already underway, Bishop Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V. is inviting lay and clergy leaders from across the Fall River Diocese to serve as members of a Planning Commission whose task will be to innovate and develop diocesan services and ministries to better serve our parishes. Three planning commissions will be established: *Catholic Social Services* to plan to partner CSS with our parishes and schools, *Youth & Young Adult* to evangelize and recruit leaders for new youth programs, and *Diocesan Governance* to evaluate the current effectiveness of chancery operations and ministries in our diocese.

Those interested parishioners can visit the diocesan website and click on the tab, *Strategic Planning Commissions*, on the home page. Bishop da Cunha thanks you for your willingness to serve! Details about February meeting dates, times and locations will be provided to those who sign up once the meeting plans are finalized.

FIRST FRIDAY MASS REMINDER: January 4th is a First Friday and we will celebrate our customary Holy Mass in commemoration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus both at 9 am and 6 pm. It also happens to fall on the memorial of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, a wonderful American saint and whose remains are interred in Maryland. You are also invited to stay and pray with the Men of the Sacred Heart for a Holy Hour from 6:30 to 7:30 pm.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS ENVELOPES: We thank all of you (parishioners and visitors) who have already taken a Christmas Flower Envelope from the main entrance and contributed to our annual effort to beautify our church sanctuary for this holy season. There is still time if you would like to donate toward the flower display as you can place your envelope in this weekend's collection or drop in the Christmas collection basket. **We will memorialize in the bulletin all names noted on the Christmas envelopes.**