SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

(Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston)

524 Holley Street, St Albans, WV 25177 304-727-3033

www.stfranciswv.org parish@stfranciswv.org www.facebook.com/stfrancisofassisisaintalbans

MARCH 1, 2026 SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

OUR MISSION

~In the spirit of Saint Francis, we, the church family, strive to discover Christ's peace in us and in each aspect of creation by welcoming and walking hand in hand with our brothers and sisters on our faith journey~

"IF GOD CAN WORK THROUGH ME, HE CAN WORK THROUGH ANYONE." - SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

A WARM WELCOME TO SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH!

To register as a new or returning member of the parish, please contact the parish office at 304-727-3033. The parish community will be indeed delighted to have you.

SUNDAY READINGS P. 1030 (YEAR A)

02 Monday	03 Tuesday	04 Wednesday	05 Thursday	06 Friday	07 Saturday	08 Sunday
Dn 9:4b-10 Mt 17: 1-9 (25)	Is 1: 10, 16-20 Mt 23: 1-12 (231) St. Katharine Drexel	Jer 18: 18-20 Mt 20: 17-28 (232) St. Casimir	Jer 17: 5-10 Lkl 16: 19-31 (233)	Gn 37: 3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a Mt 21: 33-43, 45-46 (234) World Day of Prayer	Mi 7: 14-15, 18-20 Lk 15: 1-3, 11-32 (235)	Rom 5: 1-2, 5-8 Jn 4: 5-42 or 4: 5-15 19b-26. 39a. 40-42 (28)

PARISH INFORMATION

Date	Mass Time	Mass Intention	Lector	Extraordinary Minister(s)	Altar Servers	Rosary Leader
SAT FEB 28	5:00 pm	Nanette Martin By Mike & Cay Hoh	Jacque Switzer	Midge Butler (X) Dave DeLuca (C) Leslie Huffman(C)	Volunteers	Jacque Switzer
SUN MAR 01	11:00 am	Intentions of the people of the parish	Mighty Lopez	Jennifer Lopez (X) Shaun Lopez (C) Bill Tabor (C)	Hadley Heumann Mairin Knapp Emmette Heumann	Tom Williams
MON MAR 02	—	—	—	—	—	—
TUE MAR 03	6:00 pm	Mary Jane Gertz By Tony Gertz	Pat Romanosky	Suzanne Farley	—	—
WED MAR 04	8:15 am	All The Souls in Purgatory	Helen Musrock	Lynn Fenimore	—	—
THU MAR 05	8:00 am	Protection of human life	School Students	Tom Liberatore	School Students	—
FRI MAR 06	6:00 pm	Vocation to priesthood and religious life	Dawna Kessler	Midge Butler	—	—
SAT MAR 07	5:00 pm	Intentions of the people of the parish	Lisa D'Esposito	Leslie Huffman (X) Midge Butler (C) Helen Musrock C)	Volunteers	Lisa D'Esposito
SUN MAR 08	11:00 am	Les & Mary Tabit By Sandy Williams	Mita Larson	Bill Tabor (X) Paul Niedbalski(C) Suzanne Farley(C)	Lily Palmer Sadie Palmer Diondrae Johnson	Mary Sanney

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday
Rosary: 4:30 pm
Mass: 5:00 pm

Sunday
Rosary: 10:30 am
Mass: 11:00 am

Weekdays
Tue: 6:00 pm
Wed: 8:15 am
Thurs: 8:15 am
Fri: 6:00 pm

Adoration
Fri: 5:00 pm
Friday 5:00 pm

Confession
Saturday 4:00 pm

For rental of church facilities (parish center, gym, cafeteria), please contact:
Mary Nichols
304-727-9832

St Francis of Assisi Parish And School Staff

Father Sojan Xavier, Pastor…… …… (304) 435-4342 / sxavier@dwc.org
Liz Liberatore, Parish Secretary……..…..…..……. (304) 727-3033 / parish@stfranciswv.org
Gwen Muchow, Bookkeeper……..……..….. (304) 727-3033 / gwenbmuchow@stfranciswv.org
Music Director…….....……...…..……..….
Sandi Hudson, Religion Director……..…..…….……..(304) 549-4009 / shudson@stfranciswv.org
Erin Sikora, Principal……..……..…… (304) 727-5690 / esikora@sfswv.com
Kelly Oxley, School Office Manager……...…….... (304)727-5690 / koxley@sfswv.com
Matthew Matheny, Knights of Columbus…….…...(304)545-8534/ mlmatheny1@gmail.com
Shaun Lopez, Pastoral Council President…….(681)439-0421 / shnlopez@gmail.com
Fred Heindl, Property Manager…….(304) 415-5942

Pastoral Availability

Father Sojan is available any time of day or night for spiritual guidance. If you or a family member is sick /homebound & require Communion or Sacrament of Anointing, contact him (304-435-4342) or the parish office.

Marriage Preparation

Engaged couples planning to marry at St. Francis should be practicing Catholics & are required to participate in a Marriage Preparation Program. 6 months notice is required. Contact the office to discuss date of marriage.

Order of Christian Initiation

Children ages 7-17& adults who have not been baptized or baptized but not confirmed go through a faith formation program before they are admitted to the sacraments.

Parish Office Hours Tues-Fri 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

PASTOR'S NOTE

LEAVE BEHIND TO BE TRANSFORMED

On this Second Sunday of Lent, the Word of God presents us with two powerful moments of faith: the call of Abram and the Transfiguration of Jesus.

In the First Reading (Genesis 12:1–4a), God calls Abram, saying, "Go forth… to a land that I will show you." Abram is asked to leave behind what is familiar — his homeland, his security, his past — and to trust in a promise not yet seen. There is no map, no explanation, only a promise and a blessing. And Scripture tells us simply: "Abram went as the Lord directed him." That is faith. As the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

In the Gospel (Matthew 17:1–9), Peter, James, and John are led up a high mountain. There, they witness Jesus transfigured — radiant in glory. For a moment, the veil is lifted, and they glimpse who Jesus truly is. From the cloud, the Father's voice is heard: "This is my beloved Son… listen to him."

Lent, dear parish family, is both a *journey* and a *mountain.* Like Abram, we are asked to "go forth." Perhaps this Lent, God is calling us to leave behind something that has quietly taken His place — a habit, a resentment, a comfort, or spiritual complacency. Faith requires movement. We cannot stay where we are and expect transformation.

Like the disciples, we too are given moments of light — in prayer, at Mass, or in stillness — when we glimpse Christ more clearly. The Transfiguration reminds us that beyond sacrifice and struggle lies glory; beyond the Cross is the Resurrection.

Peter wanted to stay on the mountain: "Lord, it is good that we are here." But Jesus led them back down. Why? Because faith is not lived in comfort; it is lived daily — in our homes, workplaces, parish, and community.

The Father's command still echoes today: "Listen to Him." In a noisy world filled with competing voices, Lent invites us to listen attentively to Christ — in Scripture, in prayer, and in the quiet of our hearts.

As we journey together this Lent, let us ask ourselves:

· *Where is God asking me to trust more deeply?*

· *What must I leave behind to grow spiritually?*

· *Am I truly listening to Christ?*

Lent is not merely about giving something up; it's about stepping forward in faith. May these weeks be a journey of trust like Abram's, and a journey of transformation like the disciples' on the mountain. And when the path feels uncertain, may we hear Jesus' gentle words to them — and to us: "Rise, and do not be afraid."

Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

Congratulations to Bill Shadrick, Penny Shadrick, Margaret Lavender and Dana Friley!

CATECHETICAL CORNER
THE PILLAR OF PRAYER IN LENT

Lent is a sacred season of return — a forty-day journey of repentance, renewal, and deeper communion with God. Alongside fasting and almsgiving, prayer stands as one of the three great pillars of this holy season. Without prayer, the other practices lose their spiritual depth. Prayer gives Lent its heart.

In the Gospel of Matthew (6:1–18), Jesus presents prayer together with fasting and almsgiving as essential expressions of authentic discipleship. Yet prayer comes first, because it roots everything else in a living relationship with the Father.

1. Prayer: The Heart of the Christian Life: Prayer is not merely reciting words; it is entering into relationship. As Thérèse of Lisieux beautifully said, "For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven; it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." Prayer is intimacy — love responding to Love.

Growth in the Christian life is impossible without prayer. We cannot grow in virtue, resist temptation, hear God's voice, or remain faithful to our vocation without regular communion with Him. Prayer shapes our character because it keeps us connected to the source of grace.

2. Jesus: The Model of Prayer: Throughout the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly withdraws to pray — before choosing the Twelve, before major miracles, and before His Passion in Gethsemane. If the Son of God sought solitude to commune with the Father, how much more do we need that sacred time?

3. The "Our Father": School of Relationship: Jesus warns against praying like those who babble endlessly, thinking that many words will force God's hand. "Do not be like them," He says, because our God is not a distant deity to be impressed. He is our Father, who knows what we need even before we ask.

He then gives us the "Our Father." This prayer is more than a formula; it is a school of relationship. It begins not with our needs, but with God — His name, His kingdom, His will. Before asking for daily bread, forgiveness, and protection, we first seek to align our hearts with His. Prayer is not about changing God's mind, but about allowing God to change our hearts.

At the end of the prayer, Jesus adds a challenging condition: "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you." Especially during Lent, we are reminded that receiving God's mercy is closely tied to offering mercy to others. The door to forgiveness is unlocked from our side.

4. The Desert in a Noisy World: Lent mirrors Jesus' forty days in the desert — a place not of emptiness, but of encounter. In silence and simplicity, God speaks gently to the heart.

Today's world is filled with constant noise — screens, notifications, responsibilities. Lent invites us into an interior desert. Prayer becomes our way of stepping away from distraction and rediscovering stillness.

This may mean establishing a consistent daily prayer time, arriving early for Mass to sit quietly, meditating on Scripture, praying the Rosary or the Stations of the Cross, or spending time in Eucharistic Adoration. Even five faithful minutes each day can begin to transform the heart.

5. Prayer Changes Us: Prayer does not change God — it changes us. It strengthens us in temptation, softens hardened hearts, restores perspective, and reminds us that we are never alone. Through prayer, fear becomes trust and restlessness becomes peace.

As Matthew Kelly notes in The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality, neglecting prayer gradually affects not only our relationship with God, but also our relationships with others. Prayer makes us more patient, more focused, and more loving.

6. From Saying Prayers to Meeting the Lord: Lent calls us beyond routine recitation to real encounter. The goal is not simply to "say prayers," but to meet the Lord — to listen, trust, and surrender.

This Lent, let us not merely recite the Our Father, but truly pray it — with the simple trust of a child speaking to a loving Father. Let us ask for the grace to forgive as we have been forgiven, becoming living reflections of God's mercy.

ASH WEDNESDAY WITH THE CHILDREN'S MASS

As we deepen our prayer this Lent, let silence become sacred, Scripture personal, and our participation in Mass more attentive. Let our hearts remain open.

Prayer is the lifeline of Lent. When this pillar is strong, the entire structure of our spiritual life becomes steadier. May our prayer this Lent not be an obligation, but a love story renewed.

Key takeaways from Bishop Mark Brennan's Lenten Message 2026

The importance of daily prayer to deepen one's relationship with God.

The need to fast from sin, not just food, to grow closer to God.

The value of almsgiving, which extends beyond monetary donations to acts of kindness and service

- 1. Prayer is a crucial aspect of Lent, as it helps individuals deepen their relationship with God and become more mindful of their actions.
- 2. Fasting is not just about abstaining from food, but also from sin, to grow closer to God and redirect one's focus to those in need.
- 3. Almsgiving is a vital practice that extends beyond monetary donations to acts of kindness and service, rooted in the Golden Rule and the Ash Wednesday Gospel.
- 4. Bishop Brennan encourages individuals to approach Lent as a "gymnasium" where one can engage in a "vigorous workout" of the spirit. By doing so individuals emerge at Easter with a vibrant and renewed faith.

NB. To read and reflect Bishop Brennan's full Lenten message, please go DWC.org.

MARCH SECOND COLLECTIONS

March 7-8—Diocesan Priests' Retirement Fund

Make check payable to Priests' Health & Retirement Association

Retirement Fund for Diocesan Priests Collection, March 7-8, 2026. A special second collection is scheduled for March 7-8 to support the Priests' Health and Retirement Association (PHRA), a fund that provides health insurance and retirement benefits to retired priests of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Please take a moment to reflect on the many years of service by our priests and how we can take this opportunity to thank them in a very particular way with a gift to the PHR collection.

March 7-8—School Support

LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICE

St. Francis held the first worship service of the Lenten of the season. Thank you to all who participated. The Guest Preacher for the service was Jason Robbins.

NEWS AND UPDATES

Parish Assessments: 5 Things You Should Know

What exactly happens to the money you donate at your parish on Sunday?
Where does the money go?
How is it spent?

Here are five important things you should know about the Diocesan Assessment and what it means at your parish.

The Numbers (1)

91 cents of every dollar (or more in many instances) stays right in your parish. The Diocese does, however, assess some collections in the parish.

6% of the Diocesan Assessment is used to fund the Priest Health and Retirement Fund (PHRA). This money does not come to the Diocese but rather is allocated to a separate entity. It is used to support our priests as they age and leave active ministry and enter retirement.

3% of the assessable income is Cathedraticum. This is what is used to provide operational support for the Diocese. The assessment in our Diocese is one of the lowest in the country. What we receive in assessments that the Diocese collects is not alone sufficient to sustain Diocesan operations. The 3 percent is returned to parishes in need, such as mission parishes or parishes that have difficulty covering parish operations through their collections. The assessment is also used to support Catholic Charities West Virginia and Catholic Education.

Deductions (2)

Just like with taxes, there are deductions referenced above. Under the current structure, parishes are able to maximize their offertory income by taking advantage of the following deductions:

- The first $100,000 of offertory and memorial contributions are exempt from the 3% and 6% assessments.
- The first $150,000 of parish support given to the school is deducted from assessable income.

Your Offertory Donation

- The first $50,000 of parish support given to a Catholic high school is deducted from assessable income.
- The first $100,000 of total bequests received in a calendar year are exempt.
- The first $750,000 of principal and interest paid on a DWC or bank loan is deducted from assessable income.
- The first $25,000 of parish support given to its daycare facility is deducted from assessable income.
- Approved capital campaign donations are exempt from assessment.

These deductions, which total more than $1 million, are a great benefit to parishes as they reduce the amount parishes are assessed and increase the resources available for parish needs.

How it is Spent (3)

Cathedraticum is given right back to parishes. Currently, only about 75% of parishes across the Diocese are able to pay Cathedraticum. As noted in the recently released audit report, the Diocese collected $220,149 in Cathedraticum for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025. The receipts from cathedraticum combined with Diocesan Funds subsidized parishes and schools at an expense of $6,996,002. None of the Cathedraticum collected by the Diocese is used to fund Chancery operations. Cathedraticum is also not used to pay legal fees or settlements.

2nd Collections (4)

Second collections are not assessed. These funds are collected for specific agencies outside the Diocese and the parish. Unless conducted by the parish for debt reduction, building funds, etc., the second collection is strictly a pass through the funds are not retained by the parish or the Diocese, but forwarded to the appropriate agency.

Schools (5)

School funds and fundraisers are NOT assessed by the Diocese. Tuition payments, donations to schools and school fundraising revenues are not assessed by the Diocese in any form. Any Catholic Schools donation goes directly to the school and is used solely by the school for the benefit of students.

To review the Independent Auditors' Report, Audited Financial Statements, and Notes to Financial Statements please visit

www.dwc.org

YOUTH GROUP SOUPER BOWL

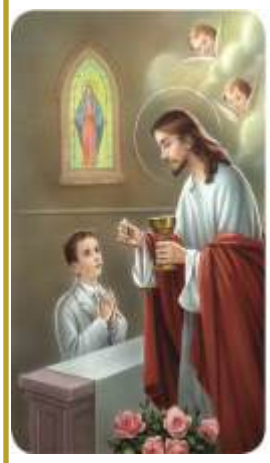
The Youth Group is grateful to all who came out to eat and support the Souper Bowl!

EVANGELIZATION MEETING

The March Evangelization Meeting will be held Monday, March 2nd at 9:00am at the home of Pat Tabor, 1209 Summit Circle.

For more information, call Mary Sanney, 304.932.5674

First Holy Communion



Our parish will be celebrating First Holy Communion shortly after Easter. If any of your children are preparing to receive this beautiful sacrament, we kindly ask that you inform the parish office at your earliest convenience. We also encourage them to begin attending the Sunday Religion classes as part of their preparation. Thank you for your cooperation and continued commitment to your children's faith formation.

FISH FRY —Feb. 20th

BEST FISH FRY IN THE VALLEY!

NEWS AND UPDATES

BLESSING OF HOMES DURING LENT AND EASTER

It is a tradition in the Catholic Church for the pastor to bless the homes of parishioners. If you wish to have your home blessed, Father will be available during the Lenten and Easter seasons. Please contact the parish office and provide your mobile number and address.

If you have any meetings or important information you would like in the bulletin, please email it to:

parish@stfranciswv.org by Wednesday at noon to be printed in that weeks bulletin. Thank you

SERVICE WANTED

We are looking for someone to mow the grounds. The grounds include the Rectory, School, Knights Hall, Church Office and lot. If interested, please contact Fred Heindl at 304.415.5942.

BLESSING BOX

St. Francis Blessing Box is located at the corner of 6th Avenue and Park Street. Your donation is a gift to someone in need. A blue bin has been placed in the back of church to collect donated items. Items greatly needed are canned goods, noodles, peanut butter, jelly, bread, hats, scarves, gloves and soups

-Uphold them in your prayers-

David DeLuca, Jay Dlugos, Suzanne Farley, Nona Fields, Jo Fletcher, Debbie Flinner, Liz Gadd, Barbara George, Robin Gothard, Aubrie Hebb, Donna Hebb, Nancy Hillen, Diane Holley-Brown, Jane Howley, Max Huck, Kenny Huck, Virgil Huck, Carmelina Kessler, Dawna Kessler, Tooter Kirk, Barbara Lambert, Larry Lerose, Madison Lopez, Susan Lopez, Sue Martin, Brent Marstellar, Mary McNeely, Joe McQuaide, Lillian Matheny, Kim McBurney, Mario Mendez, Susan Robinson, Diana Rossi, Patricia , Scarlett (child), Lillian Schilling, Michael Scott, Peggy Shelton, Matt Sowers, Becky Vannatter Smith, Joseph Swanson, Valerie Tabit, Pat Tabor, Colleen Ullmer, Joyce Weiskircher, Roberta Van Horn, Pat Vannatter, Robbie Vannatter, Barbara Yeager, Gordon Holbrook, Alaina Rae Gilbert, Tracy McGrath, Nico Sayre, Pearl Thompson, Ralph Holland, John Hebb III, Jan Quinlan, Kate Lichtenfels, Darlene Holland

Immediate Prayer needs:

Carolyn Hanson	John Carnell	Patty Young
Rick Mullins	Josephine Fletcher	Peggy Shelton
Rick Robinson	Matt Sowers	Allison Grinstead
Terry DeLuca	Dave Lucas	Brody Fulk
Margaret McEvoy	Landen Chin	Pam Burton White
Anna Ng	Michele Stugeon	Brandi Authur

NEWS AND UPDATES

Sharing our Treasure

Listed below are collections for February 21 & 22, 2026

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Collection for Church Operation……....$3,553.00
School……..……..…...……..……..00
Diocese……..……..……..……...00
Votive Candles……..…..86.00

Total……...…..……..$3,639.00

Weekly Mass Attendance
Sat –97 Sun –116
Total —213

SHARE YOUR TREASURE

The Catholic Church emphasizes the importance of giving from the heart and encourages individuals to give according to their ability. Your donation, no matter how large or small, is significant to our Church. A QR code has been created for you as an option vs weekly envelopes for our parishioners and visitors.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON FRIDAYS OF LENT

- **1:30 PM for Children**
- **6:30 PM for Parishioners**

Thank you Jonah White, Eliza Berry and Sadie Palmer for serving the children's 1:30pm Stations of the Cross on February 20th!

WOMEN'S CLUB MEETNG

The Women's Club Meeting will be held Monday, March 9th at 5:30pm in the Church for a spiritual walk with Billie Kirk. Following the walk with Billie, we will go into the school cafeteria for a meeting. The hostesses for the evening will be Helen Musrock, Phyllis Romeo and Barbara Jackson. All women of the parish are invited to come to this meeting.

Safe Environment Reporting Statement

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston maintains an Office of Safe Environment in accordance with the USCCB's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. **To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children**: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org. **To Report to Civil Authorities**: Contact your local law enforcement; numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. **To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse**, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities**: In addition to civil authorities, the diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. **To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese**, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. Or you may call Rev. Don Higgs, 304.685.2367, the Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504, or Victims Assistance Coordinator Erin McFarland at 304.559.6742. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the **EthicsPoint** platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.