

Braintree Catholic Collaborative



St. Francis Church

856 Washington Street
Braintree, Massachusetts

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 5:30PM
Sunday: 9:00, 11:30AM

Monday –Friday: 7:00am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: 12:30-2:00PM

St. Clare Church

1244 Liberty Street
Braintree, Massachusetts

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:00PM
Sunday: 7:45, 10:15AM AND 6:00pm

Saturday: 8:00am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: 8:30-9:00am

Collaborative Staff

Rev. Robert M. Blaney, Pastor
Rev. Kevin P. Leaver, Parochial Vicar
Deacon Joseph MacDonald, Collaborative Deacon/
Music Director
Deacon James Waldron, Collaborative Deacon
Mrs. Karen Lane, Religious Education Coordinator
Ms. Patty Kinnally, Office Manager
Mr. Kevin Mercier, Business Manager
Mr. Robert Muldoon, Facilities Manager
Msgr. Robert W. Oliver, In Residence
Rev. Gerald Nebo, In Residence
Deacon Michael Cavanaugh, Senior Deacon

Contact Information

www.braintreecatholic.org
781-843-1332 | Fax: 781-848-0976

Collaborative Office and Mailing Address

856 Washington Street
Braintree, MA 02184

Office Hours

Monday-Friday: 9:00-4:00

Sacrament of Marriage

A minimum of six months notice is required. Please call the Collaborative Office to schedule an appointment prior to booking a venue.

Sacrament of Baptism

2nd Sunday of the month at St. Clare at 1:30PM
3rd Sunday of the month at St. Francis at 1:30PM
Please call the Collaborative to register

Sacrament of the Sick & Communion Calls

Please notify the Collaborative Office if anyone is hospitalized or unable to attend Mass because of illness.

Bulletin Deadline

All requests must be submitted to the Collaborative Office by Monday at 1PM. Email to parish@sfab.org.

Mass Intentions

St. Francis of Assisi

Saturday, December 2, 2023

5:30PM Franklin Cropley & Steven Lemieux Anniversary

Sunday, December 3, 2023

9:00AM Flaherty Family Memorial

11:30AM Joseph Stanton Anniversary

Monday, December 4, 2023

7:00AM Richard Kelly & Doris Nelson Anniversary

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

7:00AM Parishioners of the Collaborative

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

7:00AM Martha J. Collins, Sr. Memorial

Thursday, December 7, 2023

7:00AM Albert Varraso Memorial

Friday, December 8, 2023

7:00AM Antonino Parlavecchio Memorial

12:10PM Antonietta Certo Memorial

Saturday, December 9, 2023

5:30PM Patricia Dailey Memorial

Sunday, December 10, 2023

9:00AM Elizabeth "Pat" McGrath Anniversary

11:30AM Leslie DeThomaso 15th Anniv.

If you are interested in the Online Giving option for either parish to simplify your weekly contributions, please contact the collaborative office.

Please remember our parishes when planning your estate. Thank you!

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
OF THE *Blessed Virgin Mary*

Friday, December 8 is The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation. The Mass schedule for the St. Francis /St. Clare Collaborative is:

St. Francis of Assisi

Friday, December 8 7:00AM, and 12:10PM

St. Clare

Thursday, December 7 Vigil -4:00PM

Friday, December 8 9AM and 5:30PM

Mass Intentions

St. Clare

Saturday, December 2, 2023

8:00AM John Keaveney 3rd. Anniv

4:00PM William, Sr., Miriam & Brian Little Memorial

Sunday, December 3, 2023

7:45AM Parishioners of the Collaborative

10:15AM Martha Byron 14th Anniv.

6:00PM Jarrod Petrelli Anniversary

Thursday, December 7, 2023

4:00PM Anna Tempesta & Deceased 4 Anniv.
Members of Tempesta Family Memorial

Friday, December 8, 2023

9:00AM

5:30PM James Buglio Memorial

Saturday, December 9, 2023

8:00AM

4:00PM Patrick Fleming 5th Anniv.

Sunday, December 10, 2023

7:45AM Ellsworth Rice 12th Anniv.

10:15AM Edward Chisholm Anniversary

6:00PM Parishioners of the Collaborative

•St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry Open Thursdays at St. Francis from 10AM-12NN.

If you need groceries, please call on Wednesday so that we can be prepared for your visit. Referrals and limited financial assistance are available for parishioners in need.

•Collaborative Prayer Line...

To be placed (or to pray) on the parish prayer line, please call the Collaborative office.

•Military Service...

If someone you know is deployed and you would like their info to appear on the blue board in the church, please call or email the parish office.

•Al-Anon ...

Tuesdays at 10:30 in St. Clare Church Hall

•Boy Scout Troop #138 ...

Wednesdays at 7:00PM in St. Clare Church Hall.—Contact John Collier at 781-843-3330

•Braintree Knights of Columbus Council 1462...

Second Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM in St. Francis Church Hall.

Please call the collaborative office for more information.



Advent this year is the shortest it can be at just three weeks. Because Christmas falls on a Monday this year, the fourth week of Advent is just a few hours long. Such dynamics are what make our liturgical calendar so interesting! The first Advent is said to have been hundreds of years long as the ancient Hebrew people anticipated the coming of a Messiah: the Anointed One of God. The divinely inspired writings of the Old Testament reveal a people that waited and prepared for God to send a savior. This savior would usher in a period of history where there would be freedom from oppression and the ability to worship God without fear of persecution. Think of the story of Moses' first meeting with Pharaoh where he asked for permission to take the Israelites into the wilderness to offer sacrifice to God. Pharaoh said no, of course, setting into motion the great Exodus of the Israelites escape from Egypt. In a sense, this story served as the arc type for how the concept of a Messiah worked. As Moses took the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt so the Messiah would save God's people from the power of sin and death. Actually, the ancients wouldn't have put it that way. They would have said that God would send a Messiah to raise up a powerful army to make sure the Israelites would never fall into oppression again from Pharaoh or anyone else for that matter.

Obviously, Jesus Christ is the long-awaited Messiah. It wasn't with a powerful army that he set the Israelites free but with Divine Grace overcame the power of sin and death. For this reason, in our Catholic faith, we make so much out of the image of Christ on the Cross. It's how we have been saved. Regrettably, the world is still plagued by evil and people die. So much so, it makes you wonder if the power of the cross had any effect on the world.

An important fact that we so easily forget is that Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is well underway (think Sacraments) but is not yet complete. The completion, or fullness, of the Kingdom happens when Christ returns for final judgement: separation of sheep and goats (see last Sunday's Gospel).

The earliest Christians expected Christ to return in their own life time. No one was thinking that there would be a world-wide Church that would still be around 2000 years later! And here we are, perhaps to the opposite extreme where we assume Christ will not return in our life time! As the anticipation of a quick return shaped the lives of early

Christians so the *lack* of anticipation of a quick return shapes our lives. We simply don't get all that worked up about it.

The season of Advent is intended to help us capture the sense that Christ promised to return to usher in the fullness of the Kingdom and that we are to be ready. What does it mean to be ready? At the end of the day, I suppose, it means fidelity. Despite all the *whatevers* of life, we are to remain faithful to God in Christ.

The increasing of light of the Advent wreath over the four weeks is meant to give the Church a sense that the time of Christ's return is coming nearer. (Advent calendars work the same way)



For those who would like to learn a bit more about the history of Advent, I will be offering a brief overview of Advent tomorrow night (Monday) 7:00-8:30 at St. Francis Parish Hall. This is an informal gathering where we will look at when the Church started keeping Advent, how it is structured, relationship to Christmas, spirituality, etc.

Friday, December 8, of course, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. This is a major feast in the Church which celebrates the mystery that Mary herself was conceived without original sin. In the popular prayer *Hail Mary* we say that Mary is full of grace. When you consider for how long Christians have said this prayer, the words full of grace imply that there is no sin whatsoever. She can't be full of grace and at the same time have some residual sin. Therefore, it has long been held that Mary has never had sin, including original sin. Our natural question is "how is this possible" to which, of course, there is not a satisfactory answer. The better question is "why is this necessary?" This makes great fodder for prayer. Check elsewhere in this bulletin for the Holy Day Mass schedule.

My thanks again for the prayers, cards, emails of so many parishioners during the time of my recent heart surgery and convalescence. I am noticeably feeling stronger and so am starting to return to public ministry. It will take several more weeks I am told! I am so grateful for the support and encouragement of St. Clare and St. Francis Parishes that have kept me going in recent weeks.

Fr. Bob



From
Deacon Joe MacDonald

APPRECIATION

Dear Parishioners of the Braintree Collaborative of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare,

I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your kindness and generosity during the seventeen months that I was privileged to be in your midst. Your support meant more to me than words can express, and I feel incredibly blessed to have been a part of such a wonderful community.

In January 2024, I will be moving to St. Edwards in Medfield where I have been assigned for my Optional Practical Training, which is part of my graduate program, through the Archdiocese of Boston. While I am excited about this new opportunity, I will truly miss the warmth and love of the Braintree Collaborative.

I also wanted to thank you for the Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts that you donated to my village and former parishioners back home in Nigeria. Your generosity will make a great difference in the lives of at least one hundred families who will have food to eat, and feed their children this Christmas. Next year, children from poor families will have the opportunity to enroll in Catholic Schools for proper academic and catechetical formation, and farmers will be able to afford fertilizers for their crops because of your donations. Additionally, the glasses that you donated will have a positive impact on the lives of many struggling with vision problems.

Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness, graciousness, and generosity. You have truly made a difference in the world, and I feel honored to have been part of your community.

May God bless and keep you safe in His care this Season of Advent and Always!

*With gratitude and warm regards,
Fr. Gerald Nebo 12/02/2023.*

Happy New Year! "Wait! What did you say?" You might think I'm a little early to be saying this but in fact today is New Year's Day, in the Catholic Liturgical Calendar. The first Sunday of Advent is the first day of the new liturgical year. It is a time for making ready for the coming of Christ. I'm not just talking about Christmas and the Lord's birth, as momentous an occasion that Christmas is. Advent is a time to prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth, but it is also, maybe more so, a time to prepare for His second coming at the end of time and to be ready at the end of our earthly lives to meet Him and be judged.

Today's Gospel has a cast of characters, but the nature of parables tells us that there is some other meaning there we need to work through. Thank goodness others have done the work before us.

Saint Gregory the Great explains it this way. The "man" who goes off to a faraway land represents Christ at His Ascension into heaven. He will be gone for a while. We know that he is returning but like the servants in the story we don't know when. Christ then imparts the Holy Spirit on His servants that allows them to fulfill their duties in His absence. The pastors of the Church are the doorkeepers who guard against infiltration by the devil.

When Christ returns, we can't be found asleep at the wheel. We have to be ready, and to be ready means that we have to become, by God's grace, holy. None of us will ever be perfectly holy in this life. Even the saints confessed their sins. But we certainly don't want to be found unrepentant of any unconfessed or unforgiven mortal sins that will prevent us from entering God's Kingdom.

None of us knows the hour of our own death. We might think we have all the time in the world to live any kind of existence we like, thinking "I'll have plenty of opportunity to change when I'm older" but suddenly some tragedy befalls us, and we're gone. It's too late to repent. It's too late to confess our sins and we're not ready to be judged.

Some years ago, I was at one of my son's baseball games. It was a Thursday night and I had to leave early for choir practice at St. Elizabeth's in Milton. I said my farewells and headed to the parking lot. Then I heard the crack of a bat. That's nothing unusual at a baseball game. Seconds later I heard several people cry out "Heads up!" Well, I was halfway to the parking lot and didn't think a thing of it.

"Clunk!*#! I got beaned off my head. I ended up in the E.R. instead of choir practice. All because I wasn't watchful. I wasn't ready. I didn't have my head in the game - literally.

The Gospel today warns us to be watchful and to be ready, to keep our heads in the game. So that when Christ comes either at the hour of our death, at the end of time, in the Sacraments, or in the people we meet every day made in God's image, we will be ready to greet Him with joy and happiness knowing we have lived our lives in the knowledge and love of God and Jesus who was sent to redeem us.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION—Led by Deacon Joe and Deacon Jay—Wednesdays from 7-8PM in St. Francis of Assisi Church. Church doors will open at 6:30PM.

CONFESSIONS will be heard from 6:30—8:00PM during Adoration on Wednesday, December 6th, 13th and 20th. Additional confession times will be announced in a future bulletin

CHOIR:

The choir is preparing for Christmas if anyone would like to join the Choir just for Christmas let Deacon Joe know. Rehearsals will be at 6:30 PM at Saint Clare. Why not give Jesus the Christmas present of your voice.



Grades 1-8

Classes meet Sunday, December 3rd, Tuesday December 5th and Thursday, December 7th.
All classes meet at St. Clare.

Grades 9—10+

Confirmation Classes for **Grade 10 next** meet Sunday, December 3rd 4:45PM at St. Clare. Classes are followed by the 6PM Mass. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend the Mass.



We are now booking Mass Intentions **through June 30, 2024**. To schedule a Mass or for further information please call the Collaborative Office at 781-843-1332.

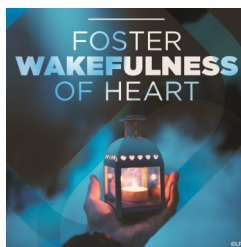


December 3 First Sunday of Advent:

As we begin Advent we are called to "Be watchful! Be alert" as we stand in joyful anticipation for the grace of Christmas to once again bless our lives. **Your gift in the St. Vincent de Paul Poor Box will help the poor to celebrate the grace of God's love this Christmas.**

The Saint Vincent de Paul Society of our collaborative is looking for additional volunteers to aid the poor in the area. The Food pantry is also looking for more help. If this is something you think you can help with please leave your name and contact information at the collaborative office.

Pantry donations can be dropped off at the Collaborative office during normal business hours (M-F 9-4). **Blue envelopes are in holders on the back inside wall of the church. Please use them for your cash, check (written to St. Vincent DePaul with SFA on the memo line), or gift card—and place them into the collection basket or through the rectory mail slot. Thank you.**



Lately I've been listening to a science-based podcast on healthy daily living. The host frequently discusses the wide range of health benefits of sleep. So, each night I'm trying to get more, and better, slumber, and it's helping me feel energized. So, why in the world should we follow Christ's advice this week? **"Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house will come ... lest he find you asleep."** Isn't sleep, especially at midnight and cockcrow, a good thing?

Of course, it is. But the wakefulness the Lord calls us to is a deep, personal orientation to Him. A nightly vigil is therefore a metaphor for this, but it's not just that. We should give up real sleep in order to pray, too. This difficult practice is a time-tested way to foster wakefulness of heart. When we give up sleep to pray, it focuses us. We learn that life is not an endless series of days. You and I belong to the Lord — awake or asleep, in life and in death. Sooner or later, even our need for our physical sleep will pass away. And our attentiveness to God — that is, whether we are awaiting Him to meet us — will be all that matters.

May I challenge us this week and this Advent to intentionally give up at least one hour of sleep each week for prayer? Stay up later, wake up in the middle of the night, or an hour earlier, and pray. Will we be a bit more tired the next day? Yes. But we'll be amazed at the spiritual wakefulness that results, too.

Father John Muir ©LPi



St. Clare
Jean Delisle
Robert Lauria

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



“Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.” - Mk 13:35-36

Readings of the Week

Readings for the week of December 3, 2023

Sunday: Is 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 (4)/1 Cor 1:3-9/
Mk 13:33-37

Monday: Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9/Mt 8:5-11

Tuesday: Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/
Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6/
Mt 15:29-37

Thursday: Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a/Mt 7:21, 24-27

Friday: Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/
Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38

Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/
Mt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8

Next Sunday: Is 40:1-5, 9-11/Ps 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 (8)/2 Pt 3:8-14/Mk 1:1-8



Our Advent Giving Tree continues this Weekend at St. Francis of Assisi. **Gifts should be returned no later than December 10th** for distribution. When considering your gift please keep in mind the following:

- * If you take a tag from the tree, please **look at it before you leave church** to be certain that you are willing and able to purchase at least some of the gifts listed there. If not—simply return it to the tree and take a different card that more suits your mindset and your budget. If someone has listed a basketball, please do not substitute a board game. (Seriously—this happens!)
- * Please check to see if the organization sponsoring the card has requested that you wrap the gift(s). If the tag says **do not wrap**, you can still help everyone involved in sorting and organizing by placing your purchase in a gift bag so that our volunteers can easily check the contents.
- * Please **securely attach the tag** you take from the tree to the outside of the bag or package. The tags are coded by color and number and we need them back so that your gift reaches the correct organization and recipient.

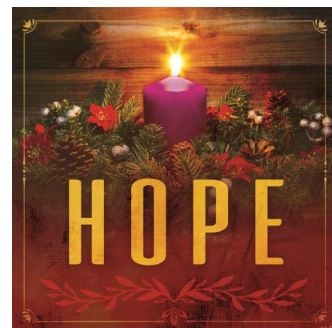
If you choose not to shop, **[do not take a tag]** gift cards (Target, WalMart, Amazon, Gas Stations, Game Stop, Movie Passes, Fast Food Restaurants, etc.) and monetary donations are always a good option. These can be used for any last minute requests for assistance that we receive (even after Christmas Day). Thank you for your thoughtfulness.



Boy Scout Troop 138 's Annual Wreath fundraiser

Traditional wreaths \$20 each or 2/\$35
Premium wreaths \$25 each or 2/\$45

Wreaths will again be on sale after all Masses at St Clare & St Francis this weekend (while supplies last). For questions please call 617-968-3446 or email stclarebsat138@gmail.com. We can deliver in Braintree if you aren't able to make the sale days. Thank you in advance for all your support over the years.





From the Archdiocese of Boston

December 3 ~ First Sunday of Advent

Jesus sets the tone for how we are to approach this Advent with these words in today's Gospel, "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come." The Church gives us Advent as the season of waiting and preparing for the coming of Christ at the end of time. Yet preparations for Christmas occupy our time leaving little or no time for reflection on Christ's admonition. This Advent, let us strive to make it a daily practice to take ten minutes each day to turn your attention to Jesus and to his presence. What change can we make or what practice can we adopt in our daily lives that will help ready us for the time when Christ comes to take us home?

The Spiritual Exercises

The Nineteenth Annotation Retreat of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, An Invitation to Meet Christ in Prayer, arranged by Fr John Sassani & Mary Ann McLaughlin is being offered in a group setting for Catholic adults. The number of participants will be limited. These Spiritual Exercises extend over the course of twenty-three weeks and are loosely aligned with the liturgical year. Meetings begin on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 and conclude April 17, 2024. The group will use the Zoom format to meet on line weekly from 10am to 12:00pm. Mary Ann McLaughlin and Deacon Dan Burns will direct the Spiritual Exercises. For further information please call 617-686-2287 or email:maryannmclaughlin2@aol.com

Mental Health Matters: A Workshop to Empower Parents

On Wednesday Jan. 24th at 7 PM join Dr. Mookie Manalili, a Catholic psychologist from Boston College; retired psychologist and pastor, Father Jim Ronan, and mental health clinician, author, and parent Suzanne Muldoon for a Zoom panel discussion on how parents can best support and care for their children and themselves in the midst of mental health concerns. The panelists will address diagnoses, recommendations, and how faith impacts healing. The complimentary workshop is sponsored by Family Life. For questions, call Emily Elliott at 617-746-5756. To register: <https://bit.ly/MHMTtoParents>

A Celebration of Con-validation

Married couples desiring holy matrimony in the Catholic Church are invited to con-validate their marriage on World Marriage Sunday, February 11, 2024 at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston at 3:00 PM with Bishop Mark O'Connell as the celebrant. A con-validation ceremony is an opportunity for couples married outside of the Church to enter into a marriage covenant in the Catholic tradition. For more information, email Emily_Elliott@rcab.org or visit our registration page at <https://bit.ly/Convalidation>



PUZZLE

Find and circle these words from today's Gospel.

WATCH
READY
TIME

COME
MASTER
EVENING

MIDNIGHT
DAWN
MORNING

U	W	A	T	H	O	W	Y	S	W	U
M	O	R	N	I	N	G	T	I	E	L
A	T	Y	U	T	K	U	A	G	V	P
S	U	N	H	A	Y	C	O	M	E	Y
T	I	M	E	W	I	H	P	A	N	D
E	C	B	W	U	E	W	I	E	I	A
R	E	A	D	Y	L	A	N	O	N	L
Y	H	O	A	E	I	T	E	H	G	E
S	A	R	W	L	S	C	P	Y	H	W
M	I	D	N	I	G	H	T	W	O	R
A	T	E	K	U	A	O	U	S	F	I



MISSION

Play a quick game of baseball. Cheer for one another. End the game with a prayer that you will keep your eyes on Jesus.



BECAUSE VIBRANT
CHURCHES MATTER

Sharing the Gospel

When you play on a baseball team, you learn how to pay attention. Your coach reminds you and your teammates to stay ready. You learn to watch the ball. Those are good lessons to learn, because Jesus wants you to pay attention, too. Keep your eyes and your mind on Jesus, so you're ready when he comes.

Prayer

Jesus, help me to stay ready for you.

Something to Draw

Draw a picture of people who help you stay ready for Jesus.

Mission for the Week

Play a quick game of baseball. Cheer for one another. End the game with a prayer that you will keep your eyes on Jesus.