

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 23, 2023

5:30PM Marilyn McGourty 1st Anniv.

Sunday, December 24, 2023

9:00AM

Christmas Eve Masses

4:00PM *Merry*

6:00PM *Christmas*

Monday, December 25, 2023

9:00AM *Merry*

11:30AM *Christmas*

Tuesday, December 26, 2023

7:00AM John W. & Annie Gallagher Memorial

Wednesday, December 27, 2023

7:00AM Philip Zingarelli 2nd Anniv.

Thursday, December 28, 2023

7:00AM William "Bill" Cotter 8th Anniv.

Friday, December 29, 2023

7:00AM Antonino Parlavecchio Memorial

Saturday, December 30, 2023

5:30PM Regis Bates 40th Anniv.

Sunday, December 31, 2023

9:00AM Dorothy McKinley 5th Anniv.

11:30AM Clougher & O'Keefe Families Memorial

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!

**HOLIDAY
OFFICE HOURS**

The Collaborative Office will be closed on Monday, December 25th and Tuesday, December 26th for the Christmas Holiday Weekend. We will reopen on Wednesday, December 27th.

Mass Intentions

St. Clare

Saturday, December 23, 2023

8:00AM

4:00PM Richard & Margaret Keane Anniversary

Sunday, December 24, 2023

7:45AM

Christmas Eve Masses

4:00PM *Merry*

6:00PM *Christmas*

Monday, December 25, 2023

7:45AM *Merry*

10:15AM *Christmas*

Saturday, December 30, 2023

8:00AM

4:00PM Edward O'Leary 8th Anniv.

Sunday, December 31, 2023

7:45AM

10:15AM Doran & Kelley Families

4:00PM

Info and events of note...

- 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.



Unlike Easter, **Christmas falls on the same date** each year, December 25. How we came to celebrate Christmas on this date is part of the rich tapestry that is the history of the Catholic Church. We don't know the exact date on which Jesus Christ was born. The reason the date is lost to us is quite simple: ancient Jewish people did not keep track of birthdays. Celebrating birthdays is something the Romans did and thus considered a pagan practice. Also, the ancients had a different concept of time which does not easily translate to our conventual calendar.

In the years following Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, the early Christians believed that Christ's second coming was imminent. It never occurred to them that there would be a Church 2000 years later! With that notion, there was no annual commemoration of any of the events in the life of Christ. The Resurrection was commemorated every Sunday with Eucharist (the new Sabbath).

After a couple of centuries, there was a growing interest in the young Church to celebrate key moments in the life of Christ as in doing so was a way to remember God's intervention in human history. In other words, if you want to reflect on how God brings about salvation, look at the life of Christ. It was understood that the birth of Christ was the central mystery of the Christian faith as it marked the moment of the *Incarnation*: when God took on a human nature.

Those who were charged with coming up with a fitting date for a celebration of the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus, chose March 25, as in the Julian calendar was the date of the Spring equinox. For the ancients, the first day of creation would have corresponded with the first day of Spring, therefore when choosing a date to celebrate the birth of Christ, they opted for March 25.

As the ancients learned more about human gestation, they realized that the Incarnation did not happen at the birth of Jesus, but at His conception when Mary, His Mother; said yes to the Angel Gabriel's message that she was chosen to be the Mother of God's Son. Thus March 25 was no longer the celebration of Christ's birth but of His conception. The celebration of His birth was moved forward nine months, landing on December 25.

So, that's a very brief history of how we came to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25. How Christmas became the huge celebration it is today is for

another article. Obviously, our modern celebration of Christmas has been shaped by generations of various cultural influences. Not every part of the Church has such a major celebration on December 25. Many eastern countries have the big celebration on Epiphany whereas we don't make too much out of it outside of Mass.

Having said all that, even though Christmas is the biggest holiday in our culture, it is not necessarily a happy time for many people. The festivities can intensify feelings of grief and isolation. Others are forced to face family dynamics that are not so cheerful. There can be pressure to get the perfect gift or decorate the house in a certain way. I encourage all of us to show patience, compassion, empathy and kindness to those having a difficult time.

Our collaborative **religious education program** has been going very well this year. If your child is not enrolled in the program, it is not too late! They are most welcome! Simply call the office to get information and sign them up.

If you or a family member are **homebound** because of age or illness and would like to receive the Sacraments of the Church (Holy Communion, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick) please call the office to let us know. We would be most happy to visit.

May God fill you with much joy and every consolation on Christmas and enrich your lives through celebrations with family and friends!

Fr. Bob



*From
The Clergy and Staff of
The Braintree Catholic
Collaborative*

Have a blessed and safe Christmas weekend.





From
Deacon Joe MacDonald

Today's Gospel comes from the first chapter of Luke. It tells us about the angel's visitation to Mary. Typical of an angel in Scripture, he tells Mary "don't be afraid." It is the same greeting given to the shepherds tending their flocks the night Jesus was born. It's the same message given to the women at the tomb on that first Easter morning. In fact, if you have some time to kill you could go through all of Scripture and discover exactly how many times the people of God are told not to be afraid. Or you can do what I did and google it. You'll discover that this phrase or one like it is found 365 times in Scripture. It is the most frequent command in the Bible. As you can see there is a verse that tells us not to be afraid for every day of the year.

There are two kinds of fear, that which gives us a prudent caution toward some danger. For example, I fear getting hit by a car crossing the street so I will wait for the light, use a crosswalk and look both ways before I cross. On the other hand, there is paralyzing fear. Using the same example, I am afraid of getting hit by a car crossing the street, therefore I will never leave my home. Sadly, there are people, perhaps our neighbors or relatives who have that kind of fear. It is disabling. It is a condition that needs to be treated professionally.

We live in a world fraught with danger and for the most part we continue with our every day lives almost as though these dangers didn't exist. We just don't dwell on them. If we did, nothing would ever get done and we would be miserable people.

We are now in the midst of a possible global conflict and fear has gripped the world. It is a dangerous time in which we live. But, in the United States we are at relative peace. That doesn't mean that conflict can't reach our shores. There is always the chance of a lone wolf attack and we should be grateful to the men and women who keep these dangers at bay.

Still, I know that I don't want war. No one does. And no one wants the flu or covid or earthquakes or experience any other kind of evil, but it happens. But God tells us not to be afraid.

Like crossing the street, we shouldn't let fear rule our lives. We can't lock ourselves inside our homes and cower under the bed because something might happen.

"Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body and what you shall put on. Is life not more than food and the body more than clothing? Therefore, do not be

anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have its own problems, let the day's own trouble suffice for the day." (Matthew 6: 25,34)

So, what do we do with the angel's message just a day before we celebrate the birth of Christ? What was the purpose of His birth that we celebrate?

The reason Christ was born, the real Christmas gift, was the Cross. Christmas led to Christ's own death and to his Resurrection and Ascension. So that through him we too are risen people. We have been given the promise of eternal life and the resurrection of our bodies. And so, we don't even have to fear the power of death. Death has no sting or victory over us. (1 Cor 15:55)

And so, if we have no fear of death (and we shouldn't) why fear war, or the flu, or cancer, or earthquakes, or meteor strikes or anything else? This doesn't mean we want to suffer for no reason, but fear shouldn't consume us. During the pandemic we had to celebrate Christmas and other holidays differently for a while but it didn't keep us from being joyful and thankful. We still celebrated.

Saint Paul tells us:

God has not given us a spirit of fear
But of power, love and a sound mind. (2 Timothy 4:7)

Let's tell everything evil the world has to throw our way, those things that frighten us or threaten to destroy our peace and tranquility, that,

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us." (Romans 8:37)

Let's listen to those words of comfort the angel spoke to Mary and the shepherds, "do not be afraid" and take them to heart ourselves because those same words are meant for each one of us. *Merry Christmas.*



The Collaborative Choir will be singing at the 4:00 Mass Christmas Eve at Saint Francis. There will be a half hour program, beginning at 3:30, including choir anthems, trumpet music and carols for all to sing.



Grades 1-8

Classes resume the week of January 2, 2024

Grades 9—10+

Confirmation Classes for Grade 9 resume on January 7, 2024. Classes for Grade 10 resume on January 21, 2024.

Merry Christmas to all!

Mass Schedule For the weekend of December 23-24, 2023

Saturday, December 23	St. Clare
	4:00PM
Sunday, December 24	St. Francis of Assisi
	5:30PM
Sunday, December 24	St. Clare
	7:45AM (ONLY – NO 10:15)
Sunday, December 24	St. Francis of Assisi
	9:00AM (ONLY – NO 11:30)

Christmas Masses - 2023

Sunday, December 24, 2023	St. Clare
	4:00PM and 6:00PM
Monday, December 25, 2023	St. Francis of Assisi
	4:00PM and 11:00PM
Monday, December 25, 2023	St. Clare
	7:45AM and 10:15AM
Monday, December 25, 2023	St. Francis of Assisi
	9:00AM and 11:30AM

Please Note there is NO 6:00PM Mass on Christmas Day

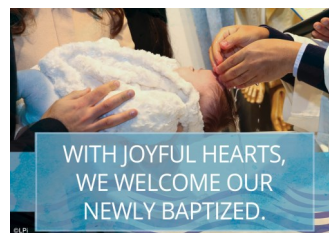
Solemnity of Mary

Sunday, December 31, 2023	St. Clare
	4:00 PM (HOLY DAY) (NO 6:00 Mass)
Monday, January 1, 2024	St. Clare – 9:00AM
	St. Francis – 7:00AM

Confessions

Saturday, December 16	St. Clare – 8:30AM
	St. Francis - 12:30 – 2:00PM

Our collaborative **religious education program** has been going very well this year. If your child is not enrolled in the program, it is not too late! They are most welcome! Simply call the office to get information and sign them up.



St. Francis of Assisi
Gabriella Queiroz Azevedo
Eva Kathleen Dittman
Scottie Rose Jacobson



St. Clare
 Helen Joyce

St. Francis of Assisi
 John J. Morris

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.



Whether you worship with us regularly, are here for the first time or are a returnee, we are so happy that you are here. If you would like to learn more about our collaborative family, please do not hesitate to call the office at 781-843-1332 or visit our website www.braintreecatholic.org.



December 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent:

Imagine how Mary felt at the birth of Jesus: excited, awed, frightened. Deep faith was her light in the darkness, for Jesus was born during the night of the year when darkness is the longest.

Your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul brought light into the darkness surrounding the hearts of those living in poverty bringing them the real, lasting, and deep joy of Christmas.

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.**

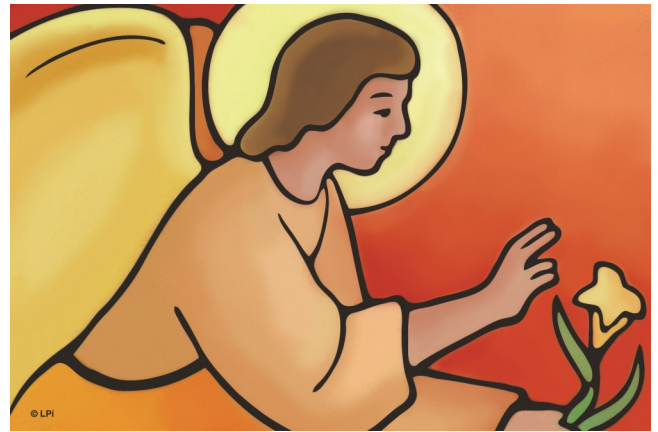


December 24, 2023 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Life is troubling. Who among us has not struggled with anxiety and difficulties, sometimes massive ones? I certainly have, as have many of my loved ones. If we do, does this mean that we don't trust the Lord or just need to toughen up?

I don't think so. How encouraging for us anxious and troubled souls to hear Luke describe the Blessed Mother Mary in these words, **"But she was greatly troubled at what was said."** An archangel has visited her. An inconceivable promise has been made to her. Her life has become wildly unpredictable, perhaps more so than any person before or since. The first point for us: the Lord is with her *precisely when she is troubled*. Her anxiousness and God's presence are not mutually exclusive. Christianity is not about a trance-like robotic indifference. It's about the presence of divine love. Even in — especially in — troubled circumstances.

Our troubled soul can become our greatest treasure. What seems so troubling at first to Mary becomes the best possible thing, Jesus, the Savior and Lord, is now her son. All the difficulties and troubles remain, and yet her movement into the fullness of God is accelerated. What is troubling you right now? This scripture invites us now, this week, to hear the Lord's messenger say to us what he said to Mary, **"Do not be afraid! You have found favor with God."** *Father John Muir* ©LPi



And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." - Lk 1:35

Readings Week of the

Readings for the week of December 24, 2023

- Sunday:** 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38
- Monday:** *Vigil:* Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/ Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 *Night:* Is 9:1-6/Ps 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13/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/ Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
- Tuesday:** Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22
- Wednesday:** 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/ Jn 20:1a, 2-8
- Thursday:** 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8/ Mt 2:13-18
- Friday:** 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6/ Lk 2:22-35
- Saturday:** 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10/ Lk 2:36-40
- Next Sunday:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40





From the Archdiocese of Boston

December 24 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

With the celebration of Christ's birth, on our doorstep – let us be sure to take a few moments to savor the words of today's Gospel. Imagine the scene and focus on what you hear spoken between Mary and the Angel. "The Lord is with you." "Do not be afraid." "Nothing is impossible for God." "Let it be done to me according to your word." Mary trusted that God was with her. . . that she had nothing to fear. Take five minutes today, before you begin to celebrate Christmas and prayerfully say the "Hail Mary" asking Mary to help strengthen your love and trust in God.

Merry Christmas from all the priests of the Archdiocese of Boston. The **Christmas Collection** supports the retirement, medical and financial needs of priests in good standing throughout the Archdiocese of Boston. These priests have given their lives to faithfully serve Christ, the Church, and you. Please be generous to this important collection. For more information, please visit www.clergytrust.org.

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/MHMtoParents>

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>

Walking with the Saints

Who doesn't love a good saint story? Join us every other week for "Walking with the Saints" - a video series where priests and religious from around the Archdiocese of Boston share about a saint they've come to know. Watch now on the Evangelize YouTube Channel – [YouTube.com/EvangelizeBoston](https://www.youtube.com/EvangelizeBoston)



PUZZLE

Unscramble words from today's Gospel:

listed
engaged
traveled

fields
sheep
angel

Savior
heaven
peace

lsitde	<u>l</u> <u>i</u> <u>s</u> <u>t</u> <u>e</u> <u>d</u>
anleg	_____
peeca	_____
enggade	_____
seehp	_____
hevane	_____
trelvaed	_____
Sivoar	_____
feldis	_____



MISSION

If you celebrate Christmas away from home, be thankful for the place where you sleep.



BECAUSE VIBRANT
CHURCHES MATTER

Sharing the Gospel

Think of the places you sleep when you are away from home. Some kids sleep in hotel beds. Other kids sleep in sleeping bags on the floor. The night Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph were far from their home, too. While angels sang and shepherds visited, their newborn King slept on a bed of hay. It was simple, but all he needed.

Prayer

God, Jesus slept on hay, and he was King. I am so thankful for my comfortable pillow!

Something to Draw

Draw a picture of yourself sleeping next to baby Jesus inside a barn with animals.

Mission for the Week

If you celebrate Christmas away from home, be thankful for the place where you sleep.