

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

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.

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

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, January 6, 2024

5:30PM Gordon Morrissey 1st Anniv.

Sunday, January 7, 2024

9:00AM Rosemarie Witherspoon Memorial

11:30AM Lucia Campo 17th Anniv.

Monday, January 8, 2024

7:00AM Maureen F. Watson Memorial

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

7:00AM Genevieve McCarthy Month' Mind

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

7:00AM

Thursday, January 11, 2024

7:00AM Joan Bernardini Memorial

Friday, January 12, 2024

7:00AM

Saturday, January 13, 2024

5:30PM George Picewick 1st Anniv.

Sunday, January 14, 2024

9:00AM Angela Kelly Memorial

11:30AM Stephen O'Brien 1st 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!



Mass Intentions

St. Clare

Saturday, January 6, 2024

8:00AM Ruth & Ed Barkowski Memorial
John Avery, Alma Casali and
Geraldine Farrell

4:00PM Lawrence Perfetti Memorial

Sunday, January 7, 2024

7:45AM Parishioners of the Collaborative

10:15AM Claire Cavanaugh and Deceased 6th Anniv.
Members of Cavanaugh and
Hamrock Family Memorial

6:00PM Bashir & Mary Khnaizir and Memorial
George Nasir

Saturday, January 13, 2024

8:00AM

4:00PM Special Living Intention

Sunday, January 14, 2024

7:45AM Parishioners of the Collaborative

10:15AM Marilyn Cavallaro 8th Anniv.

6:00PM Bernadette Lucy & Joseph Forti Memorial

The Bread & Wine for the week of January 6th through 12th were been donated in loving memory of Ruth & Ed Barkowski, John Avery, Alma Casalli and Geraldine Farrell. The **Sanctuary light** also burned in their memory.

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.



Today is the **Epiphany of the Lord**. Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning manifestation. On this particular feast we commemorate the events in the life of Christ in which He is manifested to be God's only-begotten Son: the visit of the wise men, the Baptism in the Jordan River and the first public miracle at the wedding in Cana. These three events (and you can think of many others) are ways that God has demonstrated in human history that His Son Jesus is the fulfillment of divine blessing.

I thought it would be good on this Feast of the Epiphany to look at the place of **blessings in the life of the Church**. You may recall that a week before Christmas the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) released a document called *Fiducia Supplicans* (the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith is the oldest department in the Vatican dating back to the mid 16th century. It has the responsibility for making the teachings of the Church accessible to all people and protecting the Church from the creep of heresy). The document made headlines in that it states that a priest may bless same-sex couples without validating the relationship. Although the document mentions same-sex couples it is meant to provide for any couple in an "irregular situation" (irregular meaning not in a sacramental marriage).

The document, which was approved by Pope Francis, reminds priests that they can extend blessings to persons who ask for divine assistance without necessarily declaring the relationship to be a sacrament or canonically sanctioned. When you think about it, people ask priests for blessings all the time. The priest does not stop to find out if that person is in a state of grace before offering the blessing. I suppose the person is asking for the blessing precisely because he/she may not be in a perfect state of grace and needs God's help.

Blessings are the communication of God's favor. Before considering who or what can be blessed, we ought to realize that all blessing begins and ends with God. We believe and profess that God's greatest blessing is the Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ born of Mary. In Christ the glory of God has appeared in a manner that makes God completely accessible. Through the Sacred Scriptures and Tradition we know that in taking on our human nature God has expressed His desire to bestow His favor on each person regardless of circumstances. The only persons who do not receive God's favor, I suppose, are those who do not want it or will not accept it.

An essential part of the work of the Church is to sanctify the world. It does this, in part, by administering God's blessings. Within the life of the Church it is a significant part of the ministry of ordained ministers, bishops, priests and deacons to bless persons and things. They call upon God to bestow grace that will enable a person to grow in holiness and virtue.

The effectiveness of a blessing depends on a person's disposition. Is that person wanting and willing to grow in holiness? How many times did I ask the Lord to let me pass a test in school, even though I was not well prepared? As if God were going to rearrange facts magically to accommodate my lack of preparedness. When we ask God for a blessing, we have to be willing to use it for the good, that is for something that will ultimately show the world God's goodness.

A blessing cannot be used to validate or promote sin. At times all of us have asked the Lord to bless a situation in which we are acting against God's will or against the Body of Christ the Church. This is a contradiction to the nature of blessing. Any blessing is intended to bring about God's will, which ultimately is for our salvation.

With all that said, anyone can ask for God's blessing, even if that person is not in a right relationship with God or the Church. The blessing is meant to help get rid of whatever is inhibiting a person's freedom to choose God. Therefore it does not serve anyone well for the priest to be considering who is deserving or worthy to receive God's blessing. I bless the congregation at the end of every Mass trusting that those who receive it are desiring of God's grace. The document states

Blessings lead us to grasp God's presence in all the events of life and remind us that, even in the use of created things, human beings are invited to seek God, to love him, and to serve him faithfully.^[7] For this reason, blessings have as their recipients: people; objects of worship and devotion; sacred images; places of life, of work, and suffering; the fruits of the earth and human toil; and all created realities that refer back to the Creator, praising and blessing him by their beauty.

Blessings by their nature require the recipient to be conformed to God's will. In other words what benefit can a blessing have on a person who desires to remain in perpetual sin? As a priest I have to assume that a person who is asking for a blessing wants to escape sin and be close to the Lord, otherwise why would that person want to ask for a blessing?

The document was written in answer to a number of questions that had been given to the DDF particularly about the eligibility of persons living in a situation which is contrary or inconsistent with the teachings of the Church. In

reflecting on the nature of blessing, the declaration states *It is precisely in this context that one can understand the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church's perennial teaching on marriage.*

I highly recommend reading the declaration. You can find it easily on line by typing in the title *Fiducia Supplicans*.

If there is anyone who would like to talk about the document or anything I wrote here, please let me know. I would welcome the chance to talk with you.

One of the **beautiful customs of the Epiphany** is that it is the date in which the deacon in the community would announce the date of Easter and all the feasts and fasts that are associated with it. If you consider times past, people did not have access to calendars as we do today and even if they did, they were not able to read. Therefore, they needed to be told each year on which Sunday Easter would fall given that it was a different date each year. The date for Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox.

This year the spring equinox occurs just after 11:00pm on Tuesday, March 19. The first full moon after that is on Monday, March 25 at 3:00am. Therefore Easter is Sunday, March 31. All the other moveable dates are then ascribed accordingly:

Ash Wednesday	February 14
Palm Sunday	March 24
Holy Thursday	March 28
Good Friday	March 29
Easter	March 31
Ascension	May 9
Pentecost	May 19
1 st Sunday of Advent	December 1



Heartfelt congratulations to **Deacon Tim and Joyce Sullivan** on the occasion of his ordination to the diaconate by Cardinal Sean yesterday (Saturday) at St. Francis Church. Deacon Tim has been preparing for years for this ministry. Sadly he took ill the night before his scheduled ordination in September with his class (including Deacon Jay Waldron) and was not able to be ordained. He has been assigned to be the deacon at Holy Trinity Parish in Quincy (my home parish!). I know he will do great things for the folks in Merrymount, Adams Shore, Germantown and Hough's Neck!

Fr. Bob



Grades 1-8

Classes meet Sunday, January 7, Tuesday, January 9 and Thursday, January 11, 2024.

Grades 9—10+

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

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

Rita Currie
James Frazier
Alice Zopatti
Jack Cassidy
Faye Galgay

St. Clare

Robert Henriksen

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.



Boy Scout Troop 138: Clothing AND Book Drive

Need to clean out your closet? The Troop will have bins available at the church all month to drop off clothes, coats, shoes and other fashion accessories as well as books and media. Final drop off time is Saturday January 27 from 8am-10am. Thank you in advance for your support of our troop!



From Deacon Joe MacDonald

You may have noticed that around Christmas time, starting the day after Thanksgiving that people start to shop in very strange ways. We've got Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It amazes me the lengths to which people will go in order to be the first to snag that elusive "product of the year" before they're all gone. We all remember the cabbage patch doll. Now it's what, The iPhone 54?

Every year it's something! And every year the local news will do a remote broadcast outside a Best Buy or some other store and interview the shoppers who camp out all night in freezing temperatures just to guarantee themselves one of the latest fad gadgets.

You see the same kind of possessed frenzy outside of Fenway Park or Gillette Stadium at playoff time. It's the length that people will go for something, even if it's only a fleeting craze or momentary glory.

But you know I'm only human. One year, when my daughter was about 13 years old, 'N Sync was the most popular "boy band" in America and like all kids her age she really wanted to go to the 'N Sync concert that was coming in January. The tickets were going on sale one Saturday a few weeks before Christmas and I thought it would make the best Xmas present. So at exactly 9 AM I called for tickets. Busy! I tried again at 9:02 and again at 9:05 – still busy. Now I wasn't camped outside in the cold but I was on that phone for nearly 4 hours until I got through and got the best seats I could – in the nosebleed section; the lengths that a Dad will go through to make a merrier Christmas for his little girl.

Today's Gospel is also about going to great lengths. The Magi went to extremely great lengths in their search for the newborn king.

Think about it. Quite literally they had to travel to the ends of the earth. I imagine they might have had to endure some ridicule from friends, family, and colleagues. Imagine telling your friends that you're going to follow a star to a far off land to find playoff tickets or an I-Phone.

They couldn't follow Route 95 or plug the address into a GPS. There were no advance reservations at AAA approved motels and there were no State Police units nearby if you were robbed or attacked. Yet these three wise men did it.

Seeking Christ takes effort. It takes courage. It takes faith, hope and trust.

What kind of effort do we put into finding Christ?

- Would we camp out all night in front of the Church in the

freezing cold to make sure we got in for Mass?

- Would we walk to another country where they didn't speak our language?
- How much hardship or just plain inconvenience are we willing to endure so that WE might find Christ?

Christ, Emmanuel, who shared in our humanity so that we could share in His divinity.

Jesus, who shared human suffering and death so that we could share in His resurrection and eternal life!

The anointed one of God – the Eternal Word who unites us with himself and with each other just as he and the Father are one – Why? So that we will never be far from Him and he will never be far from us.

This is no fad. This has nothing to do with a fleeting craze or a temporary encounter with someone else's victory on the field.

What we seek is the real deal. What we seek is Jesus, the Christ, God with us.

My friends when the Magi found Christ they were overjoyed – we will be too!

The Irony of the story is that everything Herod said to the Magi was right on the money – Even though his motivation was all wrong. The apostles couldn't have said it any better, the pope couldn't. Herod said:

A. Search Diligently for Christ

When you find him, come and tell me that I too may give him homage.

Herod unwittingly called the Magi to discipleship. He asked them to do what every good disciple is called to do.

1. Seek Christ and when you find him
2. Bring that good news to others.

We can look into the night sky all we want but unlike the Magi we aren't going to find the light of a star that's going to lead us to Jesus.

We can search high and low, near and far and we're not going to find an infant Christ laying in a manger.

But we still have that obligation to diligently search for Christ.

- Through prayer and Scripture
- Sacrament and Community
- In each other
- We find him in our own hearts
- We find him on the streets
- In our families
- In the boardrooms and in our classrooms
- We find Him especially in the ones nobody else wants

When Mother Teresa saw the lonely and abandoned laying in the gutters of Calcutta she saw the SAME Christ laid in that Bethlehem Manger 2000 years ago. In their suffering she saw the same suffering of Christ on the cross. She recognized the same tears that Jesus shed at the tomb of Lazarus and the same sadness at being abandoned by everyone that Jesus felt at Gethsemane

When we can look into the eyes of someone that nobody on this earth loves or desires or cares about; someone who may be repulsive or dirty or diseased; when we can recognize Christ in them and be willing to give our own lives for their welfare,

Then like the Magi our diligent searching will be complete & we'll have found Christ in our hearts and in each other and like the Magi our joy will be so great we will not be able to bear it. We will not be able to keep it to ourselves. It will spill out. We will have no choice but to bring the Good News to others, so that they too can pay Him homage and that their joy too may be complete and all the ends of the earth will see the Glory of God.



January 7 - Epiphany of the Lord:

Today we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, where the Magi find the newborn king and offer him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

In the spirit of the Magi, please put your gift in the St. Vincent de Paul blue envelope so that comfort and peace can once again be given to a newborn child.

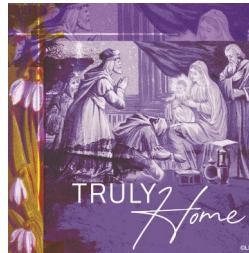
Pantry donations can be dropped off at the Collaborative office during normal business hours (M-F 9-4). **Blue envelopes are in holders on the back inside wall of the church. Please use them for your cash, check (written to St. Vincent DePaul with SFA on the memo line), or gift card—and place them into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



They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. - Mt 2:10-11

Readings for the week of January 7, 2024

Sunday: Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 (see 11)/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12
Monday: Is 55:1-11/Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 (3)/1 Jn 5:1-9/Mk 1:7-11
Tuesday: 1 Sm 1:9-20/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/Mk 1:21-28
Wednesday: 1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20/Ps 40:2 and 5, 7-8a, 8b-9, 10/Mk 1:29-39
Thursday: 1 Sm 4:1-11/Ps 44:10-11, 14-15, 24-25/Mk 1:40-45
Friday: 1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a/Ps 89:16-17, 18-19/Mk 2:1-12
Saturday: 1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a/Ps 21:2-3, 4-5, 6-7/Mk 2:13-17
Next Sunday: 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19/Ps 40:2, 4 7-8, 8-9, 10 (8a, 9a)/1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20/Jn 1:35-42



January 7, 2024 -The Epiphany of the Lord—

A stranger in a foreign land, I was exhausted and homesick as my summer Spanish immersion ended in Guatemala. The rusty minivan arriving outside my small residence filled me with joyful hope. I was flying home to the U.S. and would be, at long last, completely happy. Or so I thought. After about half an hour of being home, I thought to myself, "This place is boring. I want to go somewhere." So, I hopped in my car and left to see my friends. As I drove, I wistfully wondered, "Where am I *truly* at home?"

The feast of Epiphany has a lot to do with our notion of home. Where is our origin? Where are we going? When is our wandering done? Saint Matthew tells us of the Magi, "**They were overjoyed at seeing the star.**" This star will bring them *home*, to a place where their questing will end, and they will be satisfied. Their real home is neither in the East nor in the earthly Jerusalem. Somehow, their home is wherever this boy and his parents are.

If you're a teenager or older, you probably know by now that every physical home we have is temporary. So, we look up at the countless stars in our proverbial skies: things which bedazzle and beckon us to follow toward peace. The Gospel invites us to behold that — at long last — God has sent us a star to follow home, one that whispers, "Follow me! I will take you home!" Perhaps that star is your spouse. A friend. An opportunity. A cause. An intuition about a new direction. A prayer group. What is it for you? How will you know? It will lead you to Mary and Joseph and their son, and you will be home. *Father John Muir* ©LPi



From the Archdiocese of Boston

January 7 ~ The Epiphany of the Lord

On this feast of Epiphany, be open to hear anew the familiar story of the Magi. What lessons will we take from this gospel for our spiritual lives? Notice the persistence of the Magi to keep looking for Christ. See how reverent they were upon finding Him. As often happen, having encountered Christ, we like the Magi, are urged to take a different route to return to home. The Magi didn't find Christ in Herod's palace, rather they found him in a stable. Where are we being invited to see Christ today? What "route" - what "new way" might God be inviting us to embark on as his followers? Hopefully, the story's familiarity will not cause us to overlook what we are to discover anew, and what Christ desires to reveal!

Witness to Life with Cardinal Seán O'Malley at the National March for Life on January 19, 2024! We begin our journey to Washington, D.C. on the evening of Jan. 18. First thing Friday morning, we will celebrate life with Cardinal Seán and other archdiocesan pilgrims at [Life Fest](#) sponsored by the Sisters for Life before heading over to the March for Life. The 26-hour pilgrimage is \$75 per person and is open to families with children ages 12-17, adults, and small high-school youth groups. Register at <https://bit.ly/MarchforLife2024>

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>



PUZZLE

Find and circle these words from today's Gospel:

WISE MEN
STAR
HEROD

MESSIAH
WORSHIP
EXCITED

GIFTS
WARNED
DREAM

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



MISSION

Solve a puzzle together with your family. Work together like the wise men did.



BECAUSE VIBRANT
CHURCHES MATTER

Sharing the Gospel

Jigsaw puzzles are fun. Solve a puzzle with your whole family, and it comes together even faster. God helped the wise men solve a puzzle. They wanted to find the newborn king. Together the wise men read God's promises, did their homework, and followed the star. When all of their answers fit, they found baby Jesus.

Prayer

God, thank you for all the people who helped me find Jesus.

Something to Draw

Draw a picture of the people who help you learn more about Jesus.

Mission for the Week

Solve a puzzle together with your family. Work together like the wise men did.