

Braintree Catholic Collaborative



St. Francis Church

856 Washington Street
Braintree, Massachusetts

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 5:30PM
Sunday: 9:00 and 11:30AM
Monday –Friday: 7:00AM

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: **12:30-1:30PM**

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
Deacon Patrick Bruen, Seminarian Intern
Mrs. Karen Lane, Director of Religious Education
Ms. Patty Kinnally, Office Manager
Mr. Kevin Mercier, Business Manager
Mr. Cecil O'Brien, Facilities
Mrs. Karen Whitney, Receptionist
Msgr. Robert W. Oliver, 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 **1:00PM**
3rd Sunday of the month at St. Francis at **1:00PM**
Please call the Collaborative Office 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 21, 2024

5:30PM Patrick Fleming 6th Anniv.

Sunday, December 22, 2024

9:00AM Leslie DeThomaso 16th Anniv.

11:30AM Philipina Canale 1st Anniv.

Monday, December 23, 2024

7:00AM Acela Livelio Living

Tuesday, December 24, 2024

7:00AM George Jackson Memorial

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Please see the Christmas Schedule elsewhere in bulletin

Thursday, December 26, 2024

8:00AM Edward O'Leary Memorial

Friday, December 27, 2024

7:00AM St. John Seminary

Saturday, December 28, 2024

5:30PM Philip A. Zingarelli 3rd Anniv.

Sunday, December 29, 2024

9:00AM Patricia Dailey & Donna McSorley Memorial

11:30AM John "Sean" Sullivan and Robert, Michael, & Joseph Sullivan 1st Anniv. 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!



We are now scheduling Mass Intentions through June 30, 2025. To schedule a Mass or for further information please call the Collaborative Office at 781-843-1332.

Mass Intentions

St. Clare

Saturday, December 21, 2024

8:00AM Jake Parker Memorial

4:00PM Patrik Liam Finnerty Memorial

Sunday, December 15, 2024

7:45AM Parishioners of the Collaborative

10:15AM William R. Therese M. & Mark J. Moore Memorial

6:00PM Martha Byron 15th Anniv.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Please see the Christmas Schedule elsewhere in bulletin

Saturday, December 28, 2024

8:00AM Robert Kolson Memorial

4:00PM Edward O'Leary Memorial

Sunday, December 29, 2024

7:45AM Doran & Kelley Families Memorial

10:15AM

6:00PM

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.



Pour forth we beseech thee, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ your Son, made known through the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and cross be brought to the glory of the Resurrection.

The opening prayer of the Mass today on the **fourth Sunday of Advent** may sound familiar to some as it is also the concluding prayer to the *Angelus*. The prayer is built around the concept of the **Incarnation**, which is the central mystery of our Catholic Christian faith. Incarnation is a theological term coming from the Latin meaning to *be made in the flesh*. Essentially, the Incarnation is the mystery which professes that God permanently closes up the abyss between Creator and creation by taking on human nature. God became a human being.

In a world in which so much can be explained through the scientific method, it is hard to accept a mystery which will never be explained in science. How this happened is totally beyond human comprehension. What the Incarnation means, however, is not beyond comprehension. Looking at the history of human salvation, creation is in a state of chaos because of sin. Every person has the capacity to make choices. Regrettably, at times, all of us (save the Blessed Mother) has made choices that are not consistent with God's will or according to God's plan. Because of this, there was an abyss, a gap, if you will, between God and creation. Although there was extensive knowledge and communication between God and humanity (read the Old Testament) there was not the possibility to share in the fullness of God's life. In other words, humanity was hindered by the power of death.

By taking on a human nature, God reshaped creation completely, making it possible to share an intimate communion with God. On Christmas the Church announces to the world that God has become human in the person of Jesus, born of Mary, putting the possibility of an intimate communion into process. This intimate communion was ratified in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is to say, Jesus had to suffer human death and rise from the dead in order for us to have a radical access to God.

The incarnation, though, did not happen with the birth of Jesus. It took place at the time of His conception in the womb of His mother. The Angel Gabriel asked Mary of Nazareth if she would be willing to be the mother of God's

Son, she said "let it be done to me as you say". Mary chose to submit herself to God's will, despite her confusion as to how this could happen and all the risks that went along with it. Because of Mary's cooperation with God's will, Jesus was conceived in her womb. We celebrate the Incarnation, therefore, not on Christmas, but nine months earlier on March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation.

Christmas and its corresponding feasts show the world God-made-flesh.

Christmas time can be so intense for many people that it is hard for them to appreciate and celebrate the miracle in its own right. This was a hard lesson for me to learn during my first Christmas as a priest. There was a terrible tragedy in the parish a few days before Christmas with a funeral of a young person on Christmas Eve morning. The crowds at the Christmas Eve Masses later that day and the confusion of parking and seating and distribution of Holy Communion to so many created so much stress. Christmas was anything but prayerful. Come to find out, this was a common experience of priests and of many of our parishioners!

To prepare for the celebration of Christmas, might I suggest taking a few minutes of stillness in the hours between now and Christmas Mass. Stillness is an important spiritual practice. Simply to be still for a period of time (even if for only several minutes) eases the body, mind and soul and allows for a deeper appreciation of what is celebrated at Mass and family gatherings. You might even take the story of Christ's birth from Matthew or Luke's Gospel and read it over a couple of times.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that all the families in our collaborative of St. Francis and St. Clare parishes are profoundly blessed with spiritual insight and God's abiding consolation at Christmas!

Fr. Bob



*From the Clergy and staff of the
Braintree Catholic Collaborative*

DECEMBER 22, 2024



From
Deacon Joe MacDonald

In Today's Gospel we read about Mary's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth. It might help to re-cap a little about what occurred prior to this.

First, an angel appeared to Elizabeth's husband, Zechariah, as he was serving as a priest in the temple and told him that Elizabeth, who was barren, would bear a child. Now both he and Elizabeth were quite old, beyond the child-bearing age. Zechariah might have thought he was having a mental breakdown or something or he just thought that it was impossible at their ages, for whatever reason he didn't believe the angel. He thought it was poppycock. Just a quick point here, it is never a wise decision to doubt a messenger from God – a prophet or an angel, but particularly an angel. For his lack of faith Zechariah was struck mute for 9 months. He couldn't speak a word until he named the child John. That'll teach him!

The angel in the story came back – this time to Mary. But Mary doesn't doubt the Angel though she did wonder about the mechanics of how it was going to work since she was a virgin betrothed to Joseph. Her response was "be it be done to me according to your word." In other words, "Yes!" The original Greek phrase denotes more than a passive acceptance but a deep desire to fulfill God's will for her. If only we could have that desire ourselves.

Now that we have some background it's easier to see what's happening in today's Gospel. The first thing we notice is that Mary goes with haste to visit Elizabeth. The very first thing she does after receiving Jesus into her life was to go in haste to bring him to someone else. Isn't that the work of a disciple, an evangelist – to bring the Good News to others? How often are we eager to bring the Jesus in us to others? Mary is the ideal disciple. We should take our cue from her.

When the angel spoke to Mary we discovered the first lines of the Hail Mary. "Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you." Now upon entering Elizabeth's home she [Elizabeth] gives us more. "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Then she asks a question. "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" There are two things here. First, we notice Elizabeth's humility and then she calls Mary the "mother of my Lord." Lord is firstly a name used for God. This is not just a friendly greeting but an acknowledgement that Jesus is the Lord God, even in the womb, and that Mary is the Mother of God, a title we have

given her from the very beginnings of the Church.

Now I picture Zechariah standing silently by while all this was happening because it was all he could do – he was still mute. Elizabeth then said something else, "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." I like to think that she looked at her husband with a little smirk on her face just to needle him a bit as if to say, "Not like my knucklehead husband, the priest."

My friends, let's not be knuckleheads. As the last days of Advent wain and Christmas swiftly approaches may we ask the Lord to increase our belief and our faith. Like Mary let us be filled with grace so that we may find what is God's will for us in this life and like her have that deep desire to fulfill that will. May we also be filled with such joy at the coming of Christ, that like Mary the Spirit will drive us to go in haste and bring Jesus to our friends, neighbors, and families. What a Christmas gift that would make.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Advent Rosary

Please join us on the Monday December 23 as we pray the Rosary at 6:45 in St. Francis of Assisi Church.



Braintree Collaborative Bereavement Group meets every Saturday at 10:30 at St. Francis. This hour-long meeting will help you bring your suffering to the Lord and get to know others who are going through something similar. No sign-up, no commitment, just come and find comfort.

Please note the Bereavement Group will NOT be meeting on Saturday, December 28th.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

RECONCILIATION TIMES

Monday, December 23, 7:30am-8:00am, St. Francis Church
Monday, December 23, 6:00-7:30, St. Francis Church

Religious Education News

Class Schedule for the Week of December 22nd
No classes for the next 2 weeks.



Our Christmas Pageant will be at the 4:00 Christmas Eve Mass at St. Clare! If your child is interested in participating in the pageant and you have not already contacted Mrs. Lane, please email at klane@sfab.org **Rehearsals** will be from 4:00-5:00 on Tuesday, December 17, and Thursday, December 19. Then we will have a **dress rehearsal** on Christmas Eve at 3:00.



Baby Jesus' manger is starting to look a little cozier! Please remember to bring in the slips of paper with your random acts of kindness and place them in the basket at St. Francis Church or the manger at St. Clare Church!



I want to wish all of our families a most Blessed Christmas! It is such a privilege to work with your children as they learn about our faith! Teaching them to follow that star and understand the true meaning of Christmas is an honor, and they in turn help us all keep the childlike wonder and spirit of Christmas alive! May God Bless you all!



Tuesday, December 24th

4:00PM at St. Clare

4:00 PM at St. Francis

6:00PM at St. Clare

11:00PM at St. Francis

Wednesday, December 25th

7:45AM at St. Clare

9:00AM at St. Francis

10:15AM at St. Clare

11:30AM at St. Francis

Please note there is NO 6:00 Mass on Christmas Day.

Confessions

Monday, December 23, 2024

7:30-8AM at St. Francis of Assisi

6:00—7:30PM at St. Francis of Assisi

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Collaborative Office will close at Noon on Tuesday, December 24th and will be closed until Monday, December 30th. If you have an urgent matter that needs immediate attention please call the office at 781-843-1332 extension 180 and member of the clergy will get back to you as soon as possible.

Confirmation CELEBRATION



Congratulations to the 80 young men and women who received the Sacrament of Confirmation last weekend. Please keep them in your prayers.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth.



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

Readings of the Week

Readings for the week of December 22, 2024

Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 (4)/
Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45

Monday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10
and 14/Lk 1:57-66

Tuesday: *Morning:* 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/
Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29/Lk 1:67-79

Wednesday: *Vigil:* Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29
(2a)/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/
Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3,
11-12, 13 (Lk 2:11)/Ti 2:11-14/
Lk 2:1-14 *Dawn:* Is 62:11-12/
Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20
Day: Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Ps 98:1, 2-3,
3-4, 5-6 (3c)/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Thursday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and
8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22

Friday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97: 1-2, 5-6, 11-12/
Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Saturday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8/
Mt 2:13-18

Next Sunday: 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Ps 84:2-3, 5-6,
9-10 (see 5a)/1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24/
Lk 2:41-52



December 22 - 4th Sunday of Advent:

Jesus was born during the night of the year when darkness is the longest. The Savior of the world comes for the people in dark places. The real, lasting, and deep joy is that the Light shines there.

Through your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, "Light" has shown, bringing real, lasting and deep joy to the hearts of the poor who live in dark places in our streets and neighborhood.

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 Braintree Catholic on the memo line), or gift card—and place them into the collection basket or through the rectory mail slot. Thank you.



St. Clare
Stephen Payzant

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.





From the Archdiocese of Boston

Diaconate Inquirer Program—The Archdiocese of Boston is beginning its Inquirer Program for men interested in becoming deacons with over a dozen meetings across the Archdiocese. For more information, please go to BostonDiaconate.org and click on the "News" tab.

CURSILLO - An Opportunity to Deepen Your Faith Men's and Women's Weekends. Cursillo is a short course in Christianity. It is an encounter with Christ in a small community of the Church, in order to deepen your own faith and strengthen your ability to be witnesses of Christ in the world.

Women's Weekend: February 27 - March 2, 2025

Men's Weekend: April 3 - 6, 2025

The weekends run from Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon and are held at the Notre Dame Spirituality Center in Ipswich, MA. For information and registration, please check the Boston Cursillo website: www.bostoncursillo.org or email at bostoncursillo@gmail.com.

Witness to Life Trip (1/23-1/25)

Join Boston pilgrims at the National March for Life in Washington, D.C. in January. We will depart the archdiocese at approximately 10 PM on Thurs., Jan. 23 and arrive at Life Fest at 7:30 AM on Fri., Jan. 24 and then head to the March. We will return to the archdiocese at 12:15 AM on Jan. 25. The cost is \$80 and includes bus, Life Fest ticket, driver gratuity, and boxed lunch. Visit bit.ly/WitnesstoLife2025 to register.

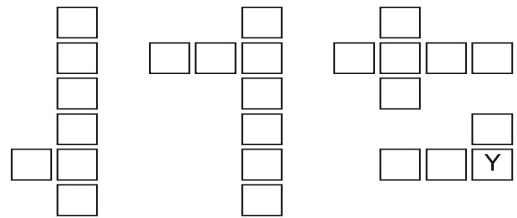
A Celebration of Convalidation—If you and your spouse desire holy matrimony in the Catholic Church, you are invited to convalidate your marriage through your parish or at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston during World Marriage Week on Sat. February 8, 2025 at 6PM with Bishop Mark O'Connell and Bishop Cristiano Barbosa. A celebration of convalidation is an opportunity for couples married outside of the Church to enter a marriage covenant in the Catholic tradition. The Cathedral ceremony will be available in the various languages of the couples present. Visit bit.ly/CatholicConvalidation for more information or call Emily



PUZZLE

Fit the following words from today's Gospel into the empty squares below.

The infant in my womb leaped for joy.



MISSION

You belong to a larger family than just the people in your home. See how many of your relatives you can name before you visit them at Christmas. When you do see them, wish them "Merry Christmas!"



BECAUSE VIBRANT
CHURCHES MATTER

Sharing the Gospel

Mary couldn't wait to visit her much older cousin, Elizabeth, up in the hills of Judea. Both of them were expecting babies. Each of them knew that the birth of her child was a special event that could only happen because they trusted God. Your own mother trusted that God would give you life in this world. Both Mary and Elizabeth watched their children grow up to do good things. You can grow up to do good things too, if you trust in God.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, help me to trust you and to remember that you are the reason we celebrate Christmas. Amen.

Something to Draw

Ask your mother who she visited while she was waiting for you to be born. Draw a picture of her visiting with a relative or friend.

Mission for the Week

You belong to a larger family than just the people in your home. See how many of your relatives you can name before you visit them at Christmas. When you do see them, wish them "Merry Christmas!"

Keep "Christ" in Christmas!

