

## *St. Francis of Assisi Parish Ann Arbor*

September 21, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

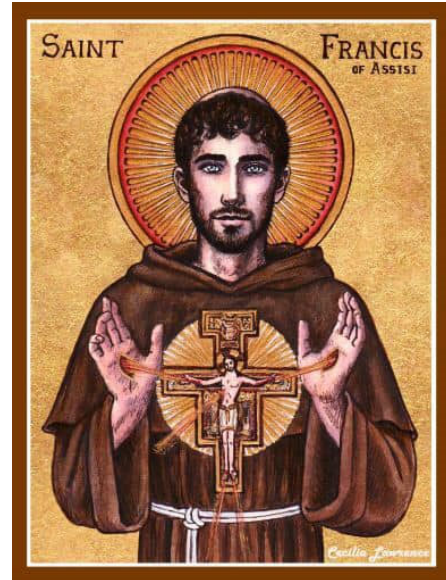
This email comes with the fervent hope that you are all doing well. Please know that you and your loved ones are always in our thoughts and prayers here at St. Francis Parish.

### ***SOLEMNITY of ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI***

On October 4 we will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Francis and inaugurate our annual month long celebration of our patronal saint. Obviously, it will be a little different this year, but I am hoping that you and your family will join us as we celebrate and learn from this holy man and the Franciscan legacy, he has left us.

*As we kick off our celebrations, I want to draw your attention to a few events:*

- **On Sat, Oct 3 we will celebrate an outdoor bilingual Mass (English and Spanish) at 5pm in the west parking lot. There will be NO 7pm Mass this day. As it is an outdoor Mass, everyone is invited to attend- to bring your own lawn chairs- to sit on the grassy hill- or to remain in your cars. After Mass, traditional Latino breads, cookies, and warm drinks will be available for takeout. Please remember to dress appropriately.**
- **On Sun, Oct 4, in addition to our regular Masses (8:30am, 10:30am and 12:30pm), we will celebrate a Holy Hour at 2:30pm before the Blessed Sacrament asking the Lord to grant healing to our nation and our world in this time of political upheaval and the impact of the Covid Virus. This Holy Hour will be live-streamed for all to participate.**



For more information, go to: <https://www.stfrancisa2.com/Celebrate-St-Francis/>

People often ask me who chose the patron for our parish. As that was back in the 1950s the records are a little sketchy. From what I know it was the privilege of the founding pastor to choose the name - unless, of course, the local bishop had other

ideas!! So we can probably assume that our founding pastor, Fr. Leon Kennedy chose St Francis. However, it came about it was an inspirational choice!

Far from being simply a lover of animals and creation, Francis was a spiritual titan! His commitment to Christ and to the Church was without limit. Despite coming from a wealthy merchant family, Francis, who was named in honor of John the Baptist, lived life completely detached from the material things of this world. His life can best be described as prayerful, humble and simple. It was this lived witness of these great virtues that caused many others to join him in what has today become the largest religious community in the Church- the Franciscan Community.

Although we are technically not part of that community we still look to Francis and his colleague St. Clare to inspire us as a parish family. It was for this reason that in our recent sanctuary renovations I chose to include icons of these two great saints. Their commitment to humble service, love of creation, lives of committed prayer and witness to Christ and his Gospel are powerful examples for all of us as we journey through life.

### ***THE IMPORTANCE of SUNDAY MASS***

Although the bishop's dispensation is in place, it is still necessary for me as your pastor to reiterate the central importance of Sunday Mass in our lives as Catholics. As I wrote in a previous email ***"the Sabbath or Lord's Day- is different from all other days of the week. All Christians are asked to respect this difference and to use Sunday for the purposes of worship of God. So, to miss Sunday Mass intentionally has always been considered a grave sin- a denial of the worship that is due to God and for Catholics a denial of what is necessary to faith- namely to hear the scriptures and to receive the Bread of Life in Holy Communion."***

As you know, we currently have five weekend Masses- each open to 150 attendees. As of now, almost all of those Masses have space available and so I am hoping that many of you will now begin to return to Mass by registering online through our parish website <https://www.stfrancisa2.com/>

### ***IMPACT of COVID on our YOUNG PEOPLE***

I am especially concerned about our young people and how their lives of faith are being affected by the pandemic. I recently spoke with a few of our teens and they admitted that they and their families felt somewhat isolated at this time. They seemed completely unaware of the impact that the pandemic has had on our liturgical life as a parish or that we were now live streaming our Masses and inviting families to pray with us virtually. Many thought the Church building was actually closed and no Masses were being celebrated.

If you have young people in your family, please let them know that we are still open for Mass and prayer and that they are able to join us and take up one of the

spaces available through registering online. As parents and guardians, you are their primary teachers and your example/witness the most powerful “homily” they will ever hear or see! So as you nourish your faith in these challenging times, you can help them to grow theirs. Let the words of scripture be your guide-

*Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deut 6:4-7)*

Once again, let me outline a few things that you can do to nourish your faith and to stay close to Christ and our parish and to help your teen. Here at SFA we are continuing to live-stream our Sat 5pm & 7pm (Spanish) and Sun 10:30am Masses so you can join us virtually from home at anytime during the day and pray along with us in a reverent and safe manner.

- You can join us by driving to the parish for our Sun 10:30am Mass, park and listen online and then receive Holy Communion immediately afterwards in front of the Church.
- If you don't have access to the internet, take 15 minutes with family and pray the rosary or use the scriptures of the day to spend some time in the presence of God.
- If your child is in grades PreK-8 and not attending a catholic school, make sure that they are registered and participating in our Religious Education classes. Outdoor and zoom classes are held on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm and Sundays at 10:15 am (and Mondays at 7 pm as part of our new Spanish group, *Unidos por la oración*). Important meetings are on Oct. 7 & 11 for Confirmation and on Oct. 14 & 18 for First Communion families. Information for our youth in Grades 9-12 is coming soon. For more details contact <https://www.stfrancisa2.com/kids/> or contact the Religious Education Office at [stfreled@stfrancisa2.org](mailto:stfreled@stfrancisa2.org) or 734-821-2130 or 734-476-5640.
- Visit the Church in the quiet of the afternoon and pray. Making that effort will keep you in the habit of sanctifying the Lord's Day.
- Attend one of our weekday Masses (M-F at 9:15am) when numbers in attendance are lower. This is especially available to our seniors and to those with medical conditions.

### ***OUR PARISH SCHOOL***

SFA School has been back in class for almost a month now. It is so good to hear all those young voices on the campus again- I kind of miss them when they are not there- the place seems so deathly quiet without them. If you have noticed the grounds has several new outdoor classroom spaces and the preschool is taking full

advantage of these beautiful Fall days to have the little ones outside, learning and playing. Once again I want to thank our principal, Mrs. Pritzel and her staff and volunteers for all their hard work and to reiterate how much we appreciate all their efforts.

### ***OUR OCTOBER PRAYER CARD- PADRE PIO***

This coming weekend, we hope to distribute prayer cards to all who attend Mass or visit the Church at any time. This year we have chosen another great saint from the Franciscan family- St. Pius of Pietrelcina. (Padre Pio) A more recent saint who died in 1968, Padre Pio was noted for his holiness, his gift of healing and his devotion to the Sacraments- especially the Blessed Sacrament and Confession.

At this time of great challenge both at home and abroad, we felt he was an appropriate choice. Together, let us pray that through his intercession, Christ's healing and peace will come upon our nation and world. We should especially pray for the healing of our nation and the attainment of justice and peace for all.

### ***A FEW OTHER THINGS!***

Before I sign off, I want to bring to your attention a few other items:

- Daily Rosary in Church and online at 8:45am each day (except Thurs when it is part of our Holy Hour).
- There is still time to join us for our Fall (Oct 11-14) getaway trip to Mackinaw Island. This trip is open to everyone, family and friends can join us! Details can be found on our parish website [www.stfrancisa2.com/](http://www.stfrancisa2.com/) and on the CTS website <https://www.ctscentral.net/> or you can book directly through the Grand Hotel at this link <https://bit.ly/STFRANCIS>
- **40Days for Life** has begun- special Mass & Holy Hour-Oct, 17 at 10am.
- Annual Flu Clinic- Mon Oct 26 from 2pm to 6pm in the PAC.
- On Sun, Nov 1 **Solemnity of All Saints**, we are planning a pilgrim walk with the saints with St. Thomas the Apostle Parish- more details later!
- Mon, Nov 2 (**Dia de Muertos**), we remember all our beloved dead with Masses at 9:15am and a Mass in Spanish at 7 pm. Our annual parish commemoration of all those who were buried from our parish in the past year will be celebrated at our 5pm Vigil Mass on Sat, Nov 7. Letters will be sent out to families listed in our register.
- Sat, Nov. 7, all Mass readers are invited to an in-house and online **Reader Workshop** from 9:30am to 12:30pm.
- We have restored our food basket in the sanctuary area as a gentle reminder that in this difficult period there are many who are in need of the basics of life- your generosity is greatly appreciated.

As always, I remind you to keep an eye on our website [www.stfrancisa2.com/](http://www.stfrancisa2.com/) for any changes to our schedules or activities.

As we celebrate St. Francis, may his example and his intercession be with us- to keep us faithful to Christ and his Gospel and united as a family in faith. So stay safe- remember this too shall pass and very soon we will be able to gather together again to bask in the great mercy of God and to celebrate our identity as part of God's family. Until then blessings to all!

*Fr. James*