

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

Serving Castle Rock since 1888

2746 Fifth Street
Castle Rock, CO

303-688-3025
www.stfranciscr.org



Parish Newsletter Advent 2022

In This Issue

2022 Advent/Christmas
Liturgical Schedule
Page 1

Pastoral Message
by Fr. Mark
Page 2 & 3

Mary & Joseph -
Poverty & Racism
by Fr. Chance
Page 4

Bringing Light to the World
by Cheyenne Secor
Page 5

Christmas Hope
by Paul Narduzzo,
Page 6

The Streets
by Grant Reincke
Page 7

Christmas Photo of
St. Francis Catholic Church
photo credit Brad Mikel
Page 8

2022 Advent/ Christmas Liturgical Schedule

Additional Confession times starting November 27th

Sundays 4:30pm to 5:15pm

Fridays 6:00pm to 7:00pm

December 8th Feast of the Immaculate Conception Holy Day

December 7th Vigil Masses: 5:00pm Children's Mass & 7:00pm Mass

December 8th: 8:00am Mass & 7:00pm Mass (bilingual)

10:00pm to 11:00pm National Night of Prayer for Life

December 9th Advent Penance Service

6:00pm to 7:00pm

Our Lady of Guadalupe Novena, December 3rd thru 12th 7:00pm to 7:30pm

Spanish Advent Retreat, December 9th thru 12th, 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Our Lady of the Guadalupe Mass and Fiesta, Dec 12th, 6:00pm to 11:30pm
(includes Novena and Retreat)

December 16th Lessons and Carols

7:00pm to 9:00pm

December 24th Christmas Eve

4:00pm Masses at St. Francis of Assisi **and** at Douglas County Event Center

7:00pm Mass at St. Francis

December 25th Christmas Day

8:00am Mass, 10:00am Mass & 12:00pm Mass (Spanish)

Calendario litúrgico de Adviento y Navidad 2022

Horario adicional para Reconciliación comenzando el 27 de noviembre
domingos 4:30pm-5:15pm y viernes 6pm-7pm

Sábado 3 de diciembre al lunes 12 de diciembre, 2022

Novena de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

7pm to 7:30pm

Jueves 8 de diciembre, 2022

Día de obligación – Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción

miércoles 7 de diciembre Misas a las 5pm (para los niños) y 7pm Misa de vigilia

jueves 8 de diciembre Misas a las 8am y 7pm el (bilingüe)

Noche nacional de oración por la vida- Hora Santa

10pm Adoración y oración

Viernes 9 de diciembre, 2022, Servicio de Reconciliación, 6pm -7pm

Lunes 12 de diciembre, 2022

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Misa y celebración

6pm Rosario y Misa, seguido de la celebración

Sábado 24 de diciembre, 2022

Misas de Nochebuena

4pm en el Centro de Eventos de Douglas County, 4pm y 7pm en la parroquia

Domingo 25 de diciembre, 2022

Misas de Navidad

8am, 10am & 12pm (español)

A Pastoral Message from Father Mark

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn”

Luke 2:7

This famous passage from the Christmas Gospel is the theme for our parish newsletter this Advent and Christmas Season. This scene happened in Bethlehem approximately 2022 years ago, but how often does it still happen today? For those who are transient, homeless, or the immigrant looking for a new life. . . do they find it among us? Do we have room for them in our “inn”?

The Hebrew word for “inn” signified a “lodging-place for the night.” Under normal circumstances, Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus would have stayed in a spare room of a relative or another family. However, Bethlehem was over-crowded due to the census called for by Caesar Augustus.

You can imagine how excited all the innkeepers would have been to have NO VACANCY. They could easily turn anyone else away. . . Including the Son of God and the Holy Family. You can also imagine how frustrating that would have been for Joseph, having led Mary, his pregnant wife, for nearly 70 miles on foot. They would have had to settle for a manger or a cave for the night.

Our Savior has been born for us - Christ the Lord! Yet even from his birth he knew what it was like to be poor, vulnerable, rejected, and cast out. If we are truly his disciples, then how can we be content with a comfortable or easy life? Does He make any difference now in how we welcome the transient, the homeless, or the immigrant?

Both Father Chance and I have been active with the Douglas County Pastors’ Roundtable and our most pressing initiative: care for our homeless.

For years, our parish has been supportive of the Winter Shelter Network that provides emergency housing. The Oyó Hotel here in Castle Rock serves many transient and homeless families and the Winter Shelter Network coordinates with them.

We are also happy to support the brand new “Homeless Engagement, Assistance and Resource Team (Heart)” of Douglas County. If you need assistance meeting the needs of someone experiencing homelessness or if you would like to partner with the HEART to meet someone’s needs they can be reached by phone (303-660-7301) or through the following online referral form:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/b7db69e78bf9449ebd8c8cab889d2a55>

Tiffany Marsitto, the HEART supervisor, can be reached via email at tmarsitto@douglas.co.us

Another exciting new option being explored is “Family Care Homes”. We heard from Germaine Meehan who invites us to consider offering open space in our homes to families that are looking for a place to stay and to get established. This would literally mean making room for them in our “inn”.

As you read the other articles in this newsletter, you will see the many ways our parish tries to meet our homeless, transient, and immigrant population. This Advent and Christmas Season, please pray for them. How can we better welcome them? How can we better welcome Jesus?

Rev. Mark Zacker, Pastor



Un mensaje pastoral del Padre Mark

“y dio a luz a su hijo primogénito, envolvió en pañales y le acostó en un pesebre, porque no tenían sitio en el albergue.”

Lc 2:7

Este famoso pasaje del Evangelio de Navidad es el tema de nuestro boletín parroquial en esta temporada de Adviento y Navidad. Esta escena sucedió en Belén hace aproximadamente 2022 años, pero ¿con qué frecuencia todavía sucede hoy? Para aquellos que están de paso, sin hogar o inmigrantes que buscan una nueva vida. . . ¿Lo encuentran entre nosotros? ¿Tenemos sitio para ellos en nuestra “posada”?

La palabra hebrea para “posada” significaba “lugar de alojamiento para pasar la noche”. En circunstancias normales, María, José y el niño Jesús se habrían quedado en una habitación libre de un pariente o de otra familia. Sin embargo, Belén estaba sobrepoblada debido al censo convocado por César Augusto.

Pueden imaginar lo emocionados que habrían estado todos los posaderos de no tener NINGUNA VACANTE. Fácilmente podrían rechazar a cualquier otra persona. . . Incluyendo al Hijo de Dios y la Sagrada Familia. También pueden imaginar lo frustrante que habrá sido para José, haber llevado a María, su esposa embarazada, por casi 70 millas a pie. Tuvieron que conformarse con un pesebre o una cueva para pasar la noche.

Nuestro Salvador ha nacido para nosotros - ¡Nuestro Señor Jesucristo! Sin embargo, incluso desde su nacimiento sabía lo que era ser pobre, vulnerable, rechazado y expulsado. Si somos verdaderamente sus discípulos, ¿cómo podemos contentarnos con una vida cómoda o fácil? ¿Hace alguna diferencia ahora en cómo damos la bienvenida a los transeúntes, los desamparados o los inmigrantes?

Tanto el Padre Chance como yo hemos participado activamente en la “Mesa redonda de pastores del condado de

Douglas” y en nuestra iniciativa más apremiante: el cuidado de las personas sin hogar.

Durante años, nuestra parroquia ha apoyado la “Red de refugios de invierno que proporciona viviendas de emergencia”. El hotel “Oyo” aquí en Castle Rock atiende a muchas familias transitorias y sin hogar y la “Red de refugios de invierno” se coordina con ellos.

También estamos entusiasmados en apoyar al nuevo “Equipo de recursos, asistencia y compromiso para personas sin hogar (corazón)” del condado de Douglas. Si necesitan ayuda para satisfacer las necesidades de alguien sin hogar o si desean asociarse con HEART para satisfacer las necesidades de alguien, pueden comunicarse con ellos por teléfono (303-660-7301) o a través del siguiente formulario de referencia en línea

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/b7db69e78bf9449ebdcc8cab889d2a55>

Pueden contactar a la supervisora de HEART Tiffany Marsitto, en tmarsitto@douglas.co.us

Otra opción nueva y emocionante que se está explorando es “Hogares de atención familiar”. Escuchamos a Germaine Meehan, quien nos invita a considerar ofrecer espacios abiertos en nuestros hogares a las familias que buscan un lugar para quedarse y establecerse. Esto significaría literalmente hacerles un lugar en nuestra “posada”.

A medida que lean los demás artículos de este boletín, verán las muchas formas en que nuestra parroquia trata de satisfacer a nuestra población indigente, transitoria e inmigrante. En esta temporada de Adviento y Navidad, oren por ellos. ¿Cómo podemos acogerlos mejor? ¿Cómo podemos acoger mejor a Jesús?

P. Mark Zacker, Párroco



"She wrapped him in swaddling

Mary and Joseph — Poverty and Racism?

I have recently joined the executive board for Catholic Charities of Central Colorado and read through a very large binder filled with much of the information I will need to know. In the binder was a very thought provoking and moving section from National Catholic Charities regarding poverty and its connection to racism. When we look at our culture we can see that there are many societal problems around these two issues. We have only to look at the # hashtag movement to see how those who are poor are negatively impacted simply by their nationality, their race, their ethnicity, and/or their religion. These are certainly not the only determining factors. Wealth, community and professional connections, education, support networks, friends and family all play a large part in determining the "success" of each one of us.

We are constantly challenged through the Gospel,

by Jesus, and by the Church, to re-examine what "success" means, what equality means, all due to the first and second commandments, but specifically to "love our neighbor as ourselves." Catholic Charities grew out of the industrialization of labor during the late 1900s and the ensuing encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor), written by Pope Leo XIII. This groundbreaking and eye-opening letter addressed the need for basic human dignity and what that would entail. It changed the world. When people were being treated like machines until they broke or died, many business owners simply replaced them and continued on as long as humans (parts) were available and labor was cheap.

In some ways we have come a long way from those days and in other ways we continue to put a much lesser value on people who do not share, or do not reflect our same idea of worth. Can you picture how Mary and Joseph would have been discriminated against during their time? It was a punishable offense (read stoned-to-death) to be pregnant out of wedlock. Mary and Joseph could not find room at the Inn. Was it because they were not living in Bethlehem? Was it because they were foreigners? Was it because of their ethnicity or race? Very little is recorded about these things. We really only have Luke's and Matthew's account of it. If you watch the *Chosen*, a popular TV series, there is a very compelling episode that shows the birth of Christ. It is easy

to see how racism and discrimination played a part in Jesus being born in His manger or trough.

The cause of poverty is more often than not racism. This is clearly explained in National Catholic Charities paper entitled *Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good*. In this paper there is a very telling quote from Pope Francis that states: "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life." Poverty comes in many forms and effects many different people. It is like a societal virus that does not distinguish between its hosts. Racism however, is very specific and targets specific hosts. "Poverty and racism are both scandalous affronts to the Christian conscience and truly endanger the social peace," health, and prosperity of our communities.



We can view any person through different lenses. We can fight to protect a privileged way of life, or we can honor our nation's most basic promise — liberty and justice for all! In order to uproot the scandal, blight, embarrassment, and indignity of poverty we must also be agents of racial justice. Let us begin this now. Let us begin this here in our church. This will only benefit everyone. As we lift up our brothers and sisters we gain so much more than a handout. We gain Christian helpers on the road to salvation. Like the good Samaritan and the poor man left for dead on the street, we reverse our current cancel culture to a Christ culture.

We must "See, Judge and Act" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2423). We must SEE the world around us by reflecting on own experience and engaging in social analysis. We must make JUDGEMENTS about our reality through the lens of Scripture and Catholic social and moral doctrine. And, we must ACT through kind and compassionate service that empowers us and the people whom we serve.

Mother Mary and St. Joseph, pray for us and help guide us.

Submitted by Fr. Chance Billmeyer

clothes and laid him in a manger...



Bringing Light to the World

In July I traveled to Lima, Peru for the second time as a youth minister with teens and young adults, and was accompanied by seven people from our parish to serve one of their poorest districts – Pamplona Alta. The people of Pamplona often refer to their community as the valley of the sun, which is ironic since I have only visited during their winters when skies are perpetually overcast. Buildings stand out with vibrant colors against the gray sky and drab fecal tinted mud. Pamplona is not only characterized by extreme poverty and lack of infrastructure, but also rampant crime. The city of Lima claims that Pamplona is not fit for human habitation, so the people of Pamplona are left to fend for themselves. They have no clean running water, so privatized trucks bring it to the people at ten times the cost of water in Lima proper. Driving takes place on dirt paths because the government will not pave roads for Pamplona, but most people don't mind as they cannot afford cars; many people rise early and take public transit further into the city for work. Electricity is offered to the community through poles and wires that they themselves built, so there are many streetlamps but few homes that have personal light, heat, or electricity.

Despite the conditions of poverty, there are few sights I could say are more beautiful than Pamplona at night. I have seen the Cliffs of Moher and Giants' Causeway; I have seen grand Cathedrals and the Coliseum; I have seen Machu Picchu; but humility shines in the simple beauty of the lights of Pamplona after sunset. You can see small lights shining in the darkness laid out across the district like stars on the valley floor, and people smile as they soak up time with their family and friends. Pamplona reminds me of the parents of our Lord.; Saint Joseph and Mother Mary approached the inn hoping for shelter – hoping for help, but when they were turned away, they found humble means to welcome our Savior into this world. They had every right to dwell in sorrow, but instead brought joy and light into darkness.

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it." (John 1:5)

Service experiences are meant to give help to those who need it because the Lord said, "whatever you have done for the least of these you have done for me." (Matt. 25:40) I propose that while we embark to change and save the poor, they change and save us. Though there are homeless who need our help in Castle Rock, far exceeding their needs is the need to minister to the spiritual depravity of our community. In the beatitudes Christ lists that, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." (Matt. 3:5) Brothers and sisters, we are poor in spirit! The good news is there is hope for us. Jesus revealed to Maria Faustina (along with the Divine Mercy Chaplet) his deep desire for the repentance of all sinners. We find hope in repentance! If your heart was an inn, how welcome would the Holy Family be this Christmas? I'd be willing to bet that for many of you (as it sometimes is for myself) you would find that there is very little space for the Lord in your heart – filled with sports, or food, or people pleasing, or any other countless number of objects that come with celebrating Christmas prematurely instead of celebrating Advent. I urge you to clean out the inn of your heart and the first way to do that is to run to the Sacrament of Confession. Let the Lord embrace you in His Love. He became incarnate as a little baby boy to show you how much He loves you, and He gifts that tangible and radical love in the confessional and in the Eucharist.

As we enter Advent (and then Christmas) find hope in repentance, find love in the Sacraments, find peace in prayer and humility, and celebrate joy, which is the light of Christ in our hearts, then spread it to the world. As we enter the new year, youth and young adult ministry are working to learn to spread Christ's light through evangelical street ministry (in addition to other service opportunities). I challenge you this Advent to welcome Christ into your heart and evaluate where in your life you can invite others to do the same. Peace, hope, love and joy to you this Advent and Christmas season!

Submitted by Cheyenne Secor,
Director of Faith Formation: High School/Life Teen,
Young Adult Ministry & Work Camp Director

Because there was no

Christmas Hope

*By Paul Narduzzo,
Regional Executive Director, Catholic Charities*

The joy of our Savior's birth that we celebrate at Christmas should remind us that no matter what our earthly life is like, we have hope for eternal life with God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Hope. It's something that we strive to provide to our clients every day in the Catholic Charities office. Our staff and volunteers do this by providing various programs, services and material goods to our clients, of course, but also - and more importantly - by simply listening, caring, and showing compassion.

Joe (not his real name) has been coming to our office for several years. He's an imposing (and if you didn't know him, you might say intimidating) person – Joe is well over six feet tall, talks loudly, and is often unshaven. His clothes don't always fit him well, and his missing teeth add to the look of someone who has had a rough life, which of course, he has had. Joe was abused as a child, removed from his parents' home and placed into foster care. His older sister adopted him some years later, but family connections have deteriorated over the years and he no longer has support from any family members. A stint in the Army left him with PTSD, and he has some physical injuries from being hit by a car a few years ago. Notwithstanding those challenges, Joe works when he can, doing odd jobs here and there to help support himself. As you might suspect, Joe is homeless. Yet beneath his external appearance and despite the extensive trauma of his past, we know Joe to be a friendly, kind man. Almost incredibly, he has a self-deprecating sense of humor and consistently maintains a positive attitude about his lot in life. When he visits us for food and other necessities he's quite chatty, but I think that simply reveals his need for human connection...the same need we all have.

There are a lot of "Joes" out there in our community. Their journey to homelessness is always a long, twisting, difficult road that produces much hardship and sadness. Sure, some find themselves on that road because they made some bad decisions. But many others find themselves on that road involuntarily because of circumstances beyond their control, when life took some unexpected, difficult turns. Still others had the misfortune of being born on that road, so to speak... pretty much like Joe. Every single one of them is our brother and sister in Christ.

As you celebrate this Christmas, remember to pray for the people like Joe who have so many challenges in their lives. Pray that they, too, know the ultimate source of hope – our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Esperanza en Navidad

*Paul Narduzzo,
Director Ejecutivo Regional, Caridades Católicas.*

El gozo del nacimiento de nuestro Salvador, que celebramos en Navidad, debe recordarnos que no importa cómo sea nuestra vida terrenal, tenemos esperanza de vida eterna con Dios a través de su Hijo, Jesucristo.

Esperanza es algo que nos esforzamos por brindar a nuestros clientes todos los días en la oficina de Caridades Católicas. Nuestro personal y voluntarios hacen esto proporcionando varios programas, servicios y bienes materiales a nuestros clientes, por supuesto, pero también, y lo que más importante, simplemente escuchando, procurando cuidado y mostrando compasión.

José (no es su nombre real) viene a nuestra oficina desde hace varios años. José es una persona imponente (y si no lo conociera, podría decir intimidante): José mide más de seis pies de altura, habla en voz alta y, a menudo, no se afeita. Su ropa no siempre le queda bien, y los dientes que le faltan se suman a la apariencia de alguien que ha tenido una vida difícil, lo cual, por supuesto, tiene. José fue abusado cuando era niño, lo sacaron de la casa de sus padres y lo colocaron en un hogar. Su hermana mayor lo adoptó algunos años después, pero las conexiones familiares se han deteriorado con los años y ya no cuenta con el apoyo de ningún miembro de la familia. Una temporada en el ejército lo dejó con trastorno de estrés posttraumático y tiene algunas lesiones físicas por haber sido atropellado por un automóvil hace unos años. A pesar de esos desafíos, José trabaja cuando puede, haciendo trabajos ocasionales aquí y allá para ayudar a mantenerse. Como puede sospechar, José no tiene hogar. Sin embargo, debajo de su apariencia externa y a pesar del extenso trauma de su pasado, sabemos que José es un hombre amable y amigable. Sorprendentemente, habla con humor acerca de sí mismo y mantiene una constante actitud positiva acerca su suerte en la vida. Cuando viene por comida y otras necesidades, es muy platicador, pero creo que eso simplemente revela su necesidad de conexión humana... la misma necesidad que tenemos todos.

Hay muchos "José" en nuestra comunidad. La jornada que los lleva a la falta de vivienda es siempre un camino largo, tortuoso y difícil que produce muchas privaciones y tristeza. Claro, algunos se encuentran en ese camino porque tomaron algunas malas decisiones, pero muchos otros se encuentran en ese camino involuntariamente debido a circunstancias fuera de su control, cuando la vida dio vueltas inesperadas y difíciles. Otros tuvieron la desgracia de nacer en ese camino, por así decirlo... así como José. Cada uno de ellos es nuestro hermano y hermana en Cristo.

Mientras celebra esta Navidad, recuerde orar por las personas como José que tienen tantos desafíos en sus vidas. Ore para que ellos también conozcan la única fuente de esperanza genuina: nuestro Salvador, Jesucristo.

room for them in the inn."

Luke 2:7



You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. That's how prayer works.

— Pope Francis —



Another way to reach out to the needy in our community is to bring Communion to the homebound. If you would like to join this ministry or if you are homebound and need Communion, please contact the parish office 303-688-3025.

The Streets

Submitted by Grant Reincke, former seminarian for the Diocese of Colorado Springs.

Grant is now volunteering with the Christ in City ministry.

If you have questions or would like to support this ministry,

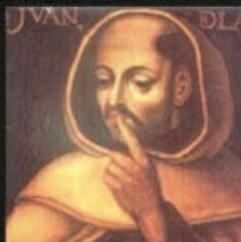
please contact Grant at grant77@christinthecity.org

Over the past month, I have walked the streets with my fellow missionaries Ann-Ayrise, Sterling, Olivia, and Erin (Ernie). Our street route is known as "Capital West," a.k.a, "Cap West." Naturally, we call it "Cap Best."

It is hard to capture our route, especially the people who spend their time on its streets, without failing to capture the reality of the place. I have seen people use drugs, including a jubilant friend of CIC who greeted me before lighting up; I have seen aggression between people on the street (I have myself been the recipient of aggression); regardless, I have seen the riches that St Lawrence spoke of in Rome, here within Denver.

I regularly think about how privileged I am to see the beauty of God's creation in the people I encounter on the street. Regularly, I hear stories of perseverance through traumatic childhoods, abandonment by family members, severe addictions, crime, and a false sense of security in gang-life. Since there is no such thing as one's life being a perfect portrait, I have the privilege to see mosaics that God is perfecting into masterpieces. I have long known that I, like my friends on the street, am a broken vessel. There is much love that I allow to pass too easily unreceived and ungiven. The hope that I receive from God, who will never give up on me, is the same hope that I share with my friends on the street.

John of the Cross



In the twilight of life, God will not judge us on our earthly possessions and human success, but rather on how much we have loved.



**St. Francis
of Assisi**
Roman Catholic Church

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage Paid
Castle Rock, CO 80104
Permit No. 2746

2746 Fifth Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Christmas Star 2021

Photo credit Brad Mikel