



Saint Anthony of Padua

84 Salem Street • Fitchburg, Massachusetts • [www.stanthonyfitchburg.net](http://www.stanthonyfitchburg.net)



# MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Vigil: Fourth Sunday of Advent**

4:00 PM Gary Sicard  
by his wife Kathy & family  
Elaine Celona  
by her husband Frank

Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

\*\*9:00 AM Deceased of Blackwelder & Pierce Families  
by their family  
Felipe Nogueira  
by his family

**VIGIL: THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS EVE)**

4:00 PM Parishioners

9:00 PM Parishioners

Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup>

**THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)**

10:30 AM Parishioners

Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>

*St. Stephen, the First Martyr*

8:00 AM James Chase  
by his sister-in-law  
Diane Lomaglio  
by her dad, mom & brother

Wednesday, December 27<sup>th</sup>

*St. John, Apostle & Evangelist*

8:00 AM Anthony "Duke" Cali (5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)  
by his wife Greta & family

Thursday, December 28<sup>th</sup>

*The Holy Innocents, Martyrs*

8:00 AM Frank Marabello (10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)  
by his daughter Julie & Denis Thibodeau  
Patrick Papa (3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary)  
by his wife Anna & family

Friday, December 29<sup>th</sup>

*St. Thomas Becket, Bishop & Martyr*

8:00 AM NO MASS

Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup>

**Vigil: Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

4:00 PM Ernest Secino  
by the Ernest Secino Trust  
Deceased of the Rollo Family  
by their family

Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>

**Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

8:00 AM Paula Kraszyk  
by the Panagiotidis family

10:30 AM Shirley & Roger Therrien  
by Elena Valeri  
Douglas & Mary Carr & Jane Mobley  
by their families

9:00 PM Parishioners

# December 23 - 24, 2023

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

**"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" – Luke 1:28**

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God's call. Mary teaches us to live with joy for all we have been given. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ's light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.

READ AND PREPARE

Next Week's Scripture readings

First Reading Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3  
Second Reading Hebrew 11:8, 12, 17-19  
Gospel Luke 2:22, 39-40

## PARISH CALENDAR, NEWS EVENTS

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES:

Sunday, December 24 4:00 PM and 9:00 PM (with choir)  
Monday, December 25 10:30 AM only

The 4:00 PM Mass will be livestreamed on our Facebook page **Saint Anthony Parish Fitchburg**. Please help spread the word to our homebound parishioners and friends unable to attend Christmas Mass with us.

Due to the Christmas & New Year Holiday, the office is open on Wednesday, December 27<sup>th</sup> only this week and Tuesday & Wednesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> next week. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and much joy and peace in the New Year!

**\*\*Father Juan will be away on vacation from Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup> through Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>.** In Father's absence there will be no weekday Masses. Please plan accordingly for your morning Masses. Weekend Masses, Saturday & Sunday, will be celebrated as usual.

Christmas Letters - Fr. Juan sent his Christmas letter out last week. If you did not receive one, please pick up a copy at the entrance of the church and kindly contact the office to be sure we have an address on file for you. Thank you.



Thank you to all who have participated in this year's Giving Tree. As of this printing, Catholic Charities received a total of 144 gifts and ASNCM received 28. All 17 seminarian tags were taken as well. The generosity of this parish community continues to overwhelm me. Thank you and God bless you in your kindness!

A Thank You – An excerpt from a Catholic Charities letter:

"We express our heartfelt gratitude for your considerate & generous donation to our Leominster office. Your contribution is truly priceless and will play a vital role in offering crucial services to children, families, and elders in our community. Your donation towards Thanksgiving gift cards is especially appreciated, as it enhances our ability to bring joy and warmth to individuals & families during this special time of gratitude & reflection. In gratitude, Timothy McMahon, Executive Director". You, St. Anthony Parishioners, donated \$2,447 in cash and an additional \$585 in gift cards!



St. Anthony Candle Intention:  
**IMO the Geremia & Duval Families**  
by Sally Duval

My Dear Friends,

***"...the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5)***

A few weeks ago, I received a Christmas card from a brother priest that had a beautiful silhouette of the newborn Jesus along with Mary and Joseph in the manger and the bible verse above inscribed by the star. For some reason, this verse resonated with me and has stayed with me for the better part of a week.

Yes, we have come to the end of a very challenging year, BUT the light of Christ still shines amidst the darkness of this world, and the darkness has not overcome this light. This is the cause of our joy as we get ready to celebrate another Christmas. I pray that this Christmas may be the best in your lives!!!, And yes, we will celebrate because no matter what may be happening in the world, we will join the angels in song on Christmas Eve when we celebrate the birth of our Messiah. God himself comes to intervene in our history to definitively set things right.

We must learn to trust the Lord. We must learn to trust in his divine will for us. Last Christmas, none of us could imagine what this year would bring, but we have to see the hand of God at work in our lives, especially in times of trial. Mary and Joseph had to trust God completely when they had to make the long trek to Bethlehem and then again when they had to flee into Egypt. We ask Mary and Joseph to help us trust God as they trusted him.

May we be a people of faith and joy that rejoices in the light and hope that Christmas brings. This light truly does shine in a world full of darkness, and this light must penetrate our hearts. We are called to be the light of Jesus to the world, so that one person at a time, one soul at a time, we can start bringing that light to a world that so desperately needs it.

On behalf of the entire community of Saint Anthony Parish, I pray that you and your family have a Blessed Christmas and a grace filled New Year.

You will all be remembered in our Christmas Masses.

God Bless,  
*Fr. Juan*

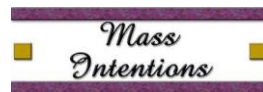
**Personal Hygiene Collection for Catholic Charities is Ongoing.**

Please bring one or two items and place them in the collection bins at the entrances of the church. Suggested Items Needed: Shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream, soap, body wash, small packs of tissues, deodorant (men & woman's), toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, hand sanitizer, lotion, toilet paper, diapers, baby wash, baby lotion.



**Food Pantry Collection** for St. Francis chapter of St. Vincent de Paul is ongoing. Please bring any nonperishable items when you can. If this is something that you have never done before, please strongly consider it. The collection bin is located at the entrance of the church.

**Tickets now available for 2024 Men's Conference** - Tickets are now available for the 2024 Worcester Catholic Men's Conference which will be held on **Saturday, March 16, 2024**, at Worcester's DCU Center. The early availability is for those who may wish to purchase tickets as Christmas gifts! Tickets are only \$50 for Adults and \$30 for Students and can be purchased online at [catholicmenworc.com](http://catholicmenworc.com)...or by calling (978) 537-3016. Speakers include Jim Wahlberg (brother of actors Mark and Donnie Wahlberg), Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers ("The Dynamic Deacon") and other Catholic Thought Leaders. Tickets include Lunch, and the opportunity to participate in Reconciliation, all-day Adoration, and to visit 50 plus relevant vendors, all within the same area of the spacious and ultra professional surroundings of the DCU Center. Sound, lighting, seating, comfort and convenience will be a huge upgrade for 2024, in addition to our usual great slate of speakers.

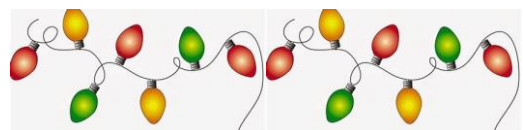


**The Mass Intention Book** is open for the months of January – June 2024.

**Tax Information - Attention:** Any donations to the parish, including December weekly envelopes, that you want counted towards your 2023 contributions must be received by us **BEFORE or on January 1<sup>st</sup>** (it falls on a weekend). Anything postmarked and received after January 2<sup>nd</sup> will be counted towards 2024. Thank you.

**Snow Policy** – For weekday Masses, (Monday – Thursday) if Fitchburg Public Schools are cancelled or delayed there will be NO Mass celebrated. This is done to keep all our parishioners safe and off the roads. Please check your local listings. If school is not in session – please use your judgement. Be Safe!

**Parish Census:** If you have moved recently or even in the last year or two, or the numbers of members in your family household has decreased due to children moving out or other reasons, please contact us via email or phone so that we can stay current with you and maintain our records. 😊 Have you been attending St. Anthony's but have not formally registered? Please consider registering so that you can be an "official" member of our family and included when any mailings go out. Registration cards are at the entrances of the church or, you can download one from our website.



**Wishing all the parishioners  
of Saint Anthony  
a joyous Christmas Season  
and Happy New Year!**



Brian T. Anderson • Michael D. Masciarelli • Alexandria Minalga, *Directors*