

A Message from Father Leonard...

September 18, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I wanted to take this opportunity to offer an update on several projects and other events going on here at St. Francis de Sales Parish.

First of all, I wanted to let you know that I will be on vacation from Thursday, September 22nd through Friday, October 7th. In my absence, **Father Bill Petro** will be here to celebrate our Masses next weekend, September 24-25. The following weekend, October 1-2, **Father James Saturday** from Jamaica will be here to celebrate our Masses and to speak to us about the ministry of Food for the Poor. During the weekdays, Deacon Harry Evans and Deacon Jay Ziolkowski will lead a daily Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion.

During the time that I am away, **Father Sebastian Devasya** at Sacred Heart Parishes in Princeton and Bluefield and **Father Jojan Joseph** at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Oak Hill will both be available in the event of an emergency. If you find yourself in need of a priest, please contact Mark in the Parish Office, Deacon Harry or Deacon Jay, or you can contact Father Sebastian or Father Jojan at the following telephone numbers:

Sacred Heart Parish, Bluefield: (304) 327-5623

SS. Peter & Paul Parish, Oak Hill: (304) 465-5445

As for events going on here at St. Francis de Sales Parish...

Our **Christian Faith Formation Program (CFF)** for children begins this weekend, which is National Catechetical Sunday. Classes begin at 9:45 a.m. and will be held in St. Francis de Sales School (Confirmation class will meet in De Sales Hall). It is a good opportunity to remind all parents and guardians of the importance of instructing our children in the Catholic Faith, and that the primary obligation for doing so rests with them. The role of the parish is "subsidiary," which means that the proper role of the parish is to assist parents in the religious education of their children. I am grateful to those who have offered themselves as catechists for the children of our parish, but our catechists cannot carry out their ministry effectively without the support of parents. Therefore, I want to encourage all parents and guardians to be sure that their children (those not enrolled in St. Francis de Sales School) are registered in our CFF program, and that they faithfully attend Mass and CFF classes each Sunday, even if they are not currently in preparation for one of the sacraments (i.e., First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, or Confirmation). Should you have any questions about our CFF program, please contact Mary Anne Adkins by email at: marvadkins75@gmail.com.

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)** began last Tuesday, September 13. If you have any questions about the RCIA process or know of anyone who would like to learn more about our Catholic Faith, please contact Deacon Harry Evans at hevans@dwc.org.

An initiative is underway to resume our **St. Francis de Sales Parish Youth Group**, which has been inactive for several years. The Youth Group will be open to all youth in grades 8 through 12, and will begin on Sunday, October 9th from 12:00 noon until 2:00 p.m. Initially the Youth Group will meet monthly on the Second Sunday of the Month, and that time together will be a time for food and fellowship, planning of future activities, and to grow together as disciples of Jesus Christ. For more information, you can contact Lisa Keiling, our Safe Environment Coordinator and Directory of Youth Ministry, at keilingforestry@yahoo.com.

Our **Hispanic Outreach** continues to bear fruit. Sister Beverly and Sister Christian have been working hard to invite members of the local Hispanic community to our Spanish Masses, which are held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 7:00 a.m., and the 4th Sunday of each month at 6:30 p.m. They continue to visit homes and places of employment and have initiated special times of Eucharistic Adoration in Spanish, Bible Courses, praying the Rosary with families, and many other events as well.

Open House and Blessing of New St. Francis de Sales Convent

As the evangelization efforts of the sisters continue, the renovation of the house at 628 S. Oakwood Avenue has been completed. The house will serve as the new St. Francis de Sales Convent and will serve as the residence for the Hermanas Misioneras Servidoras de la Palabra (Missionary Sisters Servants of the Word). An Open House and Blessing of the new convent has been scheduled for Sunday, October 23 after the 11:00 a.m. Mass. A second Open House and Blessing (in Spanish) will take place that same day after the 6:30 p.m. Spanish Mass.

In addition to the aforementioned projects, we were busy through the summer months with the installation of a new roof for St. Francis de Sales School, the addition of a 6-foot chain-link fence along the property line behind the Parish Center/Knights of Columbus Hall and Gymnasium, some garden and landscaping projects (which are still underway), and many other projects as well.

I want to thank all of you for your good stewardship of our parish. Without your financial support and volunteer efforts, so many of the good things that we try to accomplish would simply not be possible! Please know that you are appreciated, and that I hold all of you in my prayers. Please pray for me as well!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Leonard".