

# St. Francis of Assisi Parish: Generations of Faith

## A Year on Prayer: Connecting to God in Traditional and Unique Ways

Recent documents from the U. S. Bishops challenge all members of the Church to embrace the practice of lifelong learning of the faith. At every age, there is something to be learned and experienced on an individual's journey of faith. Generations of Faith offers a unique experience for all members of our faith community to learn and grow together in relationship with Jesus and His Church. In this sixth season of Generations of Faith our community will devote time to a study of prayer. It is our goal that all participants will connect with God in new ways as they become more aware of prayer as an expression of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

January 2010

### A STUDY of our Community Prayer

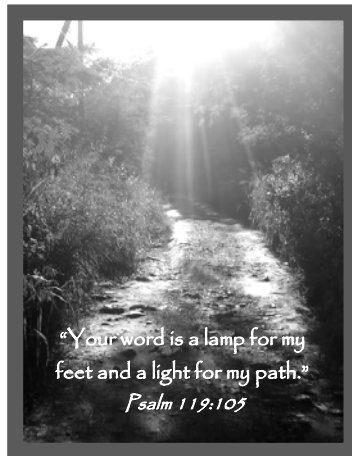
#### The Mass: The Liturgy of the Word

For sessions 4 & 5 in our Generations of Faith Year on Prayer we will cover the mass, learning about its two major components, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The word Liturgy means "work of the people." When we gather for Liturgy all present have the important work of being actively present and engaged in the mass. Our hope is that the community will grow in knowledge and understanding about this most significant and important Catholic spiritual experience of *community prayer* and worship in order to better take up the "work" of the assembly in fully participating in the mass.

The Liturgy of the Word comprises the first half of our mass beginning with the Entrance Procession and Song and ending with the Prayer of the Faithful. The focal point of this experience is Scripture, from where we are nourished upon the living

Word of God. For those who cannot receive Jesus in Eucharist, this part of the mass holds great significance because it becomes the primary source of interface with our living God, who speaks to each of us personally through His Word. †



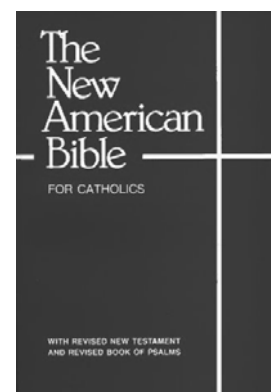
### G of F EVENT

#### The Blessing of Bibles February 6 and 7 All masses

At all masses on the weekend of February 6/7 all parish households are invited to bring their family Bible to be blessed. At this mass we will reflect on the importance of Scripture as a primary source of God's message and His method of communicating with us. The

Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit." #81 In addition to the oral tradition of the Church, "the Gospel was handed down in writing by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing." #76

Every Catholic home should have a Bible and all Catholics are encouraged to take time to read and ponder God's timeless message of love, justice, and mercy.



Copies of the *New American Bible* will be available for sale at the cost of \$5 in the narthex prior to the event masses for those who do not own a Bible and would like to have a copy blessed. †



From the new communication website offered by the Diocese: [www.christ-mass.org](http://www.christ-mass.org), under the heading of FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions):

### Why should I attend Mass every week?

At the Last Supper, Jesus gave us the gift of the Holy Eucharist as our daily Bread of Life. He reminded his disciples of the importance of eating this Bread when he said: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you shall not have life within you." When we come to Sunday Mass we are nourished by the Word of God and the Bread of Life. If we are not nourished in this way we "starve"! In a similar way, we need to come together as a community to support and to sustain one another in this journey of faith and to publicly give thanks to the Lord for all the blessings we have received.

### Do Catholics read the Bible?

Catholics are encouraged to read and meditate on Sacred Scripture for it is the Word of God. The first part of each Mass is called the "Liturgy of the Word" in which parts of the Bible are read. The homily, given by the bishop, priest or deacon is the "breaking of the Word" for the spiritual nourishment of the people. As Catholics we believe that God's Word is a living word in which God still speaks to all

people and calls them to respond.

### † RESOURCES for Reading and Interpreting Scripture correctly

#### New American Bible (NAB):

This is the Catholic Bible from which the Sunday readings are taken. It provides footnotes, which explain with great clarity more difficult verses of the Bible.

**NAB Concise Concordance, Oxford University Press:** This is a useful word index to all 73 books of the NAB. Arranged in alpha-order, it shows the book, chapter, and verse location of the most prominent words in the NAB and supplies several words of the context in which each word is found.

**New World Dictionary/Concordance to the NAB, Catholic World Press:** A comprehensive Bible dictionary and concordance designed to guide and instruct within the context of modern biblical scholarship, aided by archeology, in the light of the pronouncements by Vatican Council II on scriptural studies. Contains in depth treatment of biblical topics, and provides reference material for a thorough study of the Bible.

**New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Prentice Hall:** This commentary interprets the Bible through modern scientific criticism with respect, rigor, and clarity. This compact commentary concentrates on the cultural, historical, literary, and religious issues of the Scriptures and summarizes varied explanations of the Bible in use in the community of Roman Catholic scholars. It ultimately enables one to understand the "splendor of God's

Word" in a contemporary approach that also respects its Catholic tradition. †

### What the Church has to say about SACRED SCRIPTURE

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that "in Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, 'but as what it really is, the word of God.' God is the author of Sacred Scripture, the inspired books, which teach the truth. The Church accepts and venerates as inspired the 46 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New. The four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center." Catechism of the Catholic Church # 104-105, 107, 138,

"In the sacred books the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them: and the force of the Word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her children, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life." Dei Verbum (Constitution on Divine Revelation of Vatican II--#21) †

## Scripture

And the Liturgy of the Word

**Jesus present in Community**  
Matthew 18:20

**Prayers of the faithful**  
1 Timothy 2:1-2

**Word of God**  
1 Thessalonians 2:13

**Gloria**  
Luke 2:14