Sacramental Life

Baptism:
Scheduled Sundays at 1:30pm
Parents should contact the Rectory before the birth of the child. Both parents must come for an interview with the priest or deacon. Class also required after the interview.

Sacrament of Matrimony:
Please call the rectory at least six months in advance for an appointment with a parish priest. A marriage preparation program is required.

Penance/Reconciliation:
Saturdays 2:00—3:30pm
Also by appointment

Anointing of the Sick:
Every second Monday after the 8:30am Mass. Also anytime by calling the rectory at 757-7435.

Parish Mass Schedule:
Saturday: 4:30pm
Sunday: 8:00am, 10:00am, 12:00 noon
5:00pm Youth Mass (Christian Rock Mass)
Monday—Friday: 8:30am
Holy Days of Obligation: as announced.

Faith Formation
(1st through 8th grade)
Religious Education Coordinator:
Deacon Allan Longo: 754-6436

Music Ministry
Adult Choir Director: Lynn M. Wilson
Junior Choir Director: Marianne Craven 368-3414
CRAVEBO36@gmail.com
Youth Band Coordinator:
Greg Gullotti: ggullotti@optonline.net
Organists: Theresa Bissex
Shira Fishkin

Son Ministry/Youth Ministry Program
Marian Zahra & Frank Maiello
516-458-5060
stfranyouth@gmail.com

Pastoral Care
Road Angels: 261-4837
Communion to the Homebound: 514-9916

Ministry of Consolation & Bereavement
Diane Lake: 499-0395

Liturgical Ministry
Lector & Eucharistic Ministers
Marilyn Reilly: 261-2093

New Parishioners
Every family should be properly registered. Please stop in the sacristy after Sunday Mass or at the rectory office during office hours to pick up a census form.

Devotional Life
First Friday
9:00am—10:00am
8:00pm—10pm with Benediction

Catholic Conversion R.C.I.A.
Please call the rectory.

Liturgy of the Hours
In church Wednesday at 8:00am

Rosary:
Daily at 8:00am and 9:10am

Charismatic Prayer Group
Saturdays: 9:30am
Peggy Evans: 424-6964

Holy Hours
In the church
Wednesdays: 7:00pm—8:00pm
Fridays: 2:00pm—3:00pm

Pastoral Advisory Council
Neil Coscio, Chairperson: 261-0816

Haitian Mass
Every 3rd Saturday: 6:30pm
Deacon Jean Cantave: 923-0356

Parish Programs

Trinity Regional School
1025 Fifth Avenue
E. Northport
Principal: Jeanne Morcone
Office: 261-5130

St. Vincent de Paul Society
Meets semimonthly in the auditorium.
651-2655

In-Home Pre-Cana Seasonally in hosts home
Coordinators: 271-3566
Deacon Allan & Lorraine Longo

Little People’s Liturgy
Seasonally in hosts home
Coordinators: 271-3566
Deacon Allan & Lorraine Longo

PB&J Gang
3rd Sunday of the month
Leslie Kulewicz: 754-2132
Ivonne Porpora: 499-3780
**Mission Statement:**
St. Francis of Assisi Parish is a Christ-centered family of believers, celebrating Christ alive in our lives through the inspiration of the Gospel, church teachings and traditions and the Sacraments. We are sensitive to the spiritual and temporal needs of God’s people, acknowledging their uniqueness and dignity and are dedicated to reaching out and serving them through prayer, liturgical celebrations and social ministries. Guided by the Holy Spirit and nourished by the Holy Eucharist, we welcome all people with, respect and compassion. We are vigilant in protecting the rights of the most vulnerable.
In the tradition of our patron, St. Francis of Assisi, we put the “good news” of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into action.

**MASSES FOR THE WEEK**

**Sunday, March 16, 2014**
8:00am  St. Francis Parishioners
10:00am  Kate Porto+, Sergio Sabat+, James Philip Clarke+, Joan Montaigne+
12:00pm  Thomas Pellegrino+, Frank Perz+, Anthony Bomocore+
5:00pm  Youth of St. Francis, Margaret Craig+

**Monday, March 17, 2014**
8:30am  Patricia Carroll+

**Tuesday, March 18, 2014**
8:30am  Frank Lobasso

**Wednesday, March 19, 2014**
8:30am  Josephine & Michael Trotta+

**Thursday, March 20, 2014**
8:30am  Living Ints. of Gawaine & Rosemarie Esteibar

**Friday, March 21, 2014**
8:30am  Conversion of America’s Heart to End Abortion

**Saturday, March 22, 2014**
4:30pm  Mary LaPadula+(1st Anniversary), June Rowland+

**Sunday, March 23, 2014**
8:00am  St. Francis Parishioners
10:00am  Kate Porto+, William Mahoney+
12:00pm  Maureen Allen, Richard Nigro+
5:00pm  Youth of St. Francis

**Ministers for Saturday and Sunday March 22nd & 23rd**

**Saturday**
4:30pm  
Eucharistic Ministers: Diane Bauge, Sean Pugni, Anne Attivissmo, Frances Takach, Eileen McGloin
Lector: Robert Bauge
Altar Servers: Monika & Mackenzie Sivilli

**Sunday**
8:00am  
Eucharistic Ministers: Deacon Jean Cantave, Gawaine Esteibar, Helen Flanders, Dolores Dooley, Germulee Osse
Lector: Rosemarie Esteibar
Altar Servers: Nicholas, Anthony & Vincent Alfiero
10:00am  
Eucharistic Ministers: Deacon Jim Byrne, Pam Capotosto, Judy McKenna, Louise Mordarski, Charles Giardino
Lector: Ellen Lobasso
Altar Servers: Valerie Gianotti, William Barbaccia
12:00pm  
Eucharistic Ministers: Deacon Allan Longo, Lorraine Longo, Kathleen Dyckes, Pat Wahrheit, Chris Torns
Lector: George Pozderec
Altar Servers: Elias Smith
5:00pm  
Eucharistic Ministers: Mary Ann Fetzer, Thomas Fetzer
Lector: Mike Kitakis
Altar Servers: James Butron

**Saint Francis Parish/Huntington Hospital Eucharistic Schedule**
First, Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of the Month
Meet at 9:15am in Hospital Lobby

**March 23rd:** Dcn. Jean Cantave, Ann Cajigas, Peggy Evans, MaryAnn Fetzer, Clare Intemann, Tom Lemp, Volvox Osse, Carol Queally

**Please pray for the sick of the Parish**
There’s a lot going on!
I’m happy to say that our Commitment Weekend presentation was well received. Some returned the pledge cards right then and there and of course, many more took them home with plans to discuss the pledge and return the card by mail or this week in the basket.

Now is the time to make a pledge on our Capital Campaign Drive. No money is due until May, but it is important now that we begin to get an idea of where we are at. We have about $500,000 in pledges more than 60% of our core goal of $800,000 and we are approaching 50% of our vision goal of $1,200,000. Thank you so much for your generous response. This campaign is on its way to a good success!

Living the Eucharist
Small faith - Sharing Groups
We launched our Lenten small groups discussion program this week. The response has been better than last year. It is not too late to “come aboard”. Ask a friend who attended how it went - almost everyone is saying that the sharing and praying together have been very helpful personally and in developing a deeper prayer life. So ask around and learn what you can about the “faith-sharing” groups!

Parish Appreciation Night
Every active parishioner is invited! We are celebrating in the spirit of our Faith Renewal during Lent and on the occasion of our Capital Campaign which is on its way to a good success! Call the rectory and Let us know you are coming!

Date: Saturday, March 29th
Place: Lower Church
Time 7:30pm
(Regular Sunday Offertory)
Last Sunday’s weekly offering:$9,852.00
Last Year’s Sunday offering: $10,228.50

Thanks for Giving First Fruits & Taking a Step!!!

Bulletin Reflection
“Bear your share of the hardship which the gospel entails, ” St. Paul tells Timothy in today’s second reading. What sacrifice is asked of me for the sake of the Gospel? How willing am I to bear my share?

Living Stewardship
We are grateful this week for all stewards in our parish who use the season of Lent as an opportunity to fast, pray and give alms, seeking neither recognition or applause for their effort.

March 16—Second Sunday of Lent:
In the Gospel Jesus is transfigured and a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased: Listen to him.”

Do we listen to Jesus when he asks us to take care of our brothers and sisters who are suffering? Your gift in the St. Vincent de Paul Poor Box will help the poor to celebrate the grace of God’s love this Easter.

SUNDAY READINGS for next week, March 23rd
Exodus 17:3-7
The people of Israel receive yet another lesson in faith. God provides them with water from solid rock.
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
We hear how the Father, Jesus and the Spirit are at work in our lives. They are the source of our faith, hope, and love.
John 4:5-42
Jesus reveals himself to a Samaritan woman as the living water of eternal life.

Send us your email if you would like to start receiving “Bringing Home the Word”, a weekly message based on the Sunday Scripture readings.
Thank you to the following
77 individuals & families
for creating a strong foundation for our
winter 2014 capital campaign
nearly $480,000 in pledges
please consider making your
commitment today!!
pledge cards are available for your convenience in the pews &
at the volunteer table in the vestibule

Anonymous (5)
Mr. & Mrs. William Adams
Diane & Michael Alfino
Claudia & James Alfiero
Bernadette W. Allen
The Annibale Family
Msgr. Patrick Armshaw
Arlene and Murray Baken
Richard & Celeste Bartunik
and Family
Tom & Anne Buckley
Dr. & Mrs. Craig Butler
Deacon Jim & Eileen Byrne
Robert & Marilyn Campana
Barbara Cavalier
Robert & Leora Cerbone
Kenneth & Nancy
Christensen
Steven Costello & Karen
Costello-Roth
Robert & Marianne Craven
Lorraine M. Cullen
Mr. & Mrs. John D.
DeStefano
Kathleen R. Dykes
Janice & Robert Empiricino
Gawaine & Rosemary
Esteban
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Farmer
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Fetzer
Robert & Helen Flanders
Tim & Becky Foley
Jeanne Foley
Mrs. Diane French
Julia & Richard Fried
Diane & Charles Giardino
Craig & Renda Grassi
Ms. Collene Greco
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Haas
Mr. Steven Hearl
Charles Holt Jr
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Iaquinta
Mr. & Mrs. John Intemann
Rev. Peter Kaczmarek
Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Kett
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Kelly
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. Kofel
Mrs. Diane Lake
Janice A. Lewis
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Lobasso
Deacon Allan & Lorraine
Longo
Paul & Barbara Magali
Richard McClure & Lina
Caccia
Rosemarie McDowell
Ms. & Mrs. L. Mercantini
In Memory of Joan & Walter
Montaigne
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Mooney
Keith & Virginia Moore
Jean & Robert Myers
Mr. & Mrs. Francis Neary
Volvik & Gernslee Osse
Mr. & Mrs. William Pearsall
Mr. & Mrs. George Pozdenev
Carol Ann Quesley
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas A.
Ramer
Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Ritchel
Eileen Rowe
Mr. & Mrs. Victor Rumore II
Carmela Sansanelli
Paul & Joan Sepp
Rosemary Skrobanes
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Stebbins
Jane Steinmetz
Mr. & Mrs. Al Swick
Frances Takach
Rick & Robin Thompson
Mr. & Mrs. William P.
Tucker
Margaret Rose Wagner

*Pledge cards can be dropped off or mailed to the rectory or placed in the collection to the attention of the capital campaign.

This listing was updated as of Tuesday, March 11, 2014 *If you wish to remain anonymous, please contact the parish office at 631-757-7435
If you would like to fulfill your pledge through Faith Direct please submit both a pledge card and a Faith Direct form.

Road Angels are needed to drive parishioners
to and from doctor appointments.
Please call the Pastoral Care Office if you can help!
261-4837
2014 Catholic Ministries Appeal
Serving God by Serving Others

During the Lenten Season we are asked to pray, fast and give alms to renew our discipleship in Christ. Please pray for those in need, whether they are suffering materially, emotionally or spiritually.

While you practice fasting and abstinence during these forty days, please remember all those who need our help like:

- John, one of the many homeless war veterans, who rely on our Parish Outreach programs for a hot meal.
- 90 year-old Sophie, who like thousands of other homebound seniors, gets hot, nutritious meals delivered.
- 75 year-old Clara who lives in one of Catholic Charities affordable safe senior apartment complexes.
- The Browns, and more than 100,000 families like them, who need a little extra help with clothing and food.

To help support them, consider making a gift to the Catholic Ministries Appeal as part of your Lenten almsgiving.

Prayerfully consider making a pledge today through the forms provided in church or visit www.CatholicMinistriesAppeal.org to make an online donation.

PARISH APPRECIATION NIGHT—YOU’RE SPECIAL! YOU’RE INVITED!

The Parish extends to all its active members a most cordial invitation to join us for a Parish Appreciation Dinner. Save the date - Saturday, March 29th in the lower church!

We are presenting you with our Famous Roast Beef Dinner with beer and wine to celebrate our commitment and our devotion to the parish and its diverse members.

Invitations will go out specifically to members of various ministries and faithful contributors. We apologize if you are active and we omitted your name. Call us so that we can prepare properly for this great event. The deadline is March 18th. Everyone planning to come should notify us so we can purchase enough of everything. This is an Appreciation Dinner you do not want to miss. Spouses of course are always welcome. Be there and be the recipient of our heartfelt gratitude and friendship in Christ.

The St. Francis weekly Booster Club Winner is
The Coscio Family!

Congratulations!

Tickets are $50.00 and are available in the Rectory. Your ticket is entered to win Every Week!

St. Francis Parish
FESTIVAL
2014

~ SAVE THE DATES ~ VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
May 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th

Help is Needed in ALL areas & levels of involvement !!!

*Kindly email: stfrangreenlawn@aol.com or call 757-7435 or leave a post on our FACEBOOK page with your name & contact info

~ We Look Forward to Working Together ~
God's Blessings !!

Hebrews 13:16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
Scripture teaches that night-and-day prayer is deeply connected to the fullness of God’s power and purpose being released (Luke 18:7-7, Isaiah 62:6-7). Pray now for the Holy Spirit to be manifest in power to transform anxiety and depression and to heal us spiritually, emotionally and physically.

RESPECT LIFE NEWS

This year the Solemnity of St. Joseph is March 19, 2014. We offer this prayer for our fathers: “St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foster father of the Son of God, obtain from Jesus the grace we fathers need to raise our families according to the will of God. We need light to recognize our grave responsibility as husbands and fathers. Above all we need the courage to persevere in the fatherly care of our families through time into the endless reaches of eternity. Amen.”

Intercessions for Life: Second Sunday of Lent
For expectant parents being pressured to end the life of their unborn child: May they experience the encouragement of the Lord with practical and life-giving support from communities like ours. We pray to the Lord.

Word of Life: “Be kind, especially with the infirm. Love them well…Oh yes! Be kind. It is a great grace God is giving you. In serving the aged, it is he himself whom you are serving.”
~St. Jeanne Jugan, Founder of the Little Sisters of the Poor

Ave Maria Vigil for Life Tuesday, March 25th (Feast of the Annunciation) 10 AM in front of Planned Parenthood, 70 Maple Ave. Smithtown~ Prayers and Witnessing~

During our LENTEN DIAPER DRIVE our Baby Corner gratefully welcomes contributions of diapers, unscented baby wipes, unscented baby wash, and unscented baby shampoo, Pampers, Huggies, and Luv’s diapers sizes 4, 5, and 6 are needed at this time. Our little boys and girls could use spring clothes toddler sizes 2-5. You may leave all contributions in the white crib in the St. Francis of Assisi Baby Corner located in the chapel of our Church. We thank God through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Francis for all you have been doing for our precious babies. The Life Center of Long Island at 631-243-2373 in Deer Park offers help with a crisis pregnancy, healing after an abortion, or to donate baby equipment. Please do not bring baby equipment to our Church as we do not have the storage for these items; rather, call the Life Center to make arrangements. Thank you so much!

THE RACHEL VINEYARD WEEKEND RETREAT FOR MEN AND WOMEN is those seeking healing after an abortion. Call Deacon Joe at 516-445-3927 or Donna Crean at 631-258-5062 or e-mail rvr@lifecenterli.org Happy Saint Patrick’s Day!!!

Please continue to pray each day for all our precious babies—born and unborn—and their parents!!! Pray the rosary for the conversion of America’s heart to end abortion.
Last Sunday, our topic was on Lent. The teenagers took part in a special Lenten experience. They followed the footsteps of Peter’s journey with Jesus. Feeding of the five thousand, walking on water, awakening Jarius’ daughter, Peter as the rock of the church, and denying Jesus and his crucifixion. It was a powerful way to start this Lenten season.

For teenagers in high school (9th -12th)

We meet in the lower level of the church from 6:30-8:00 pm

Free pizza always available!

March Meeting Dates:
23rd, 30th

St. Francis Youth Ministry
stfranyouth@gmail.com
Friend us on Facebook @ St. Francis Youth Ministry

GOD - UNITED NEWS

Please join us at our next
PB&J Gang date:
Sunday, March 16th
6:30-8:00pm

Hip hip hooray! We made an amazing 663 sandwiches at our last PB&J Gang.
Thank you to all who helped! Loving hands, Caring hearts, Spreading joy, is a very good thing.
Come and join us in spreading the joy.

PB&J gang can help satisfy your service hour requirements

Please bring donations of Bread, Smooth Peanut Butter & Jelly!

“I am only one but I can do something, and what I can do with God’s help, I will do”
-St Francis of Assisi

St. Francis Rocks!
Do you like to sing? Play an instrument? Then join us every Sunday for the 5pm Youth Mass Rehearsal starts at 4pm in the church.
It’s a fun way to be involved in your church!

For information about the Youth Mass
Contact our Youth Music Coordinator Greg at ggullotti1@optonline.net

Not sure about joining, come check out the 5 pm Sunday Mass and see what it’s all about!

Jr. Choir
Calling all boys and girls, grade 1-6.
Come join the St. Francis Children’s Choir.
Rehearsal will be from 11-11:30, after Sunday Mass.
Children can still be part of the LPL Program downstairs during Mass.
Come sing, have fun and enjoy a snack too.

Meet at the piano.
Just bring a smile.
Marianne Craven—368-3141 CRAVEBO36@gmail.com
PRAYER FOR OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE

O prince of peace, we humbly ask Your protection for all our men and women in the military service. Give them unflinching courage to defend with honor, dignity and devotion the rights of all who are imperiled by injustice and evil. Please guard our churches, our homes, and our schools, our hospitals, our factories, our buildings and all who are within from harm and peril. Protect our land and its peoples from enemies within and without. Grant an early peace with victory founded upon true justice. Please instill in the hearts and minds of people everywhere a firm purpose to live forever in peace and good will toward all. Amen.

Thirsting for Healing?

Living Waters Center is a counseling center which provides the Healing Waters of Counseling, Prayer and Love to those who come through our doors. Our therapists are rooted in the prayer that is a basic part of our Catholic Tradition and Faith. Living Waters Center provides individual, family, couple and group therapy. Most insurance plans are accepted. For more information, please call 631-754-3990 or go to our website livingwatersli.com or email us athlvh20@verizon.net

Perry Como Lodge 2846

Sock Hop

St. Philip Neri Parish Center, 15 Prospect St. Northport
Saturday, March 29 @ 7:00pm
$35 per person
Reservations required by March 25
~Burgers, Hot Dogs, Fries, Knishes, Beer, Soda, Make your own Sundaes and Egg Creams are included~
50’s dress is optional.
Contact—Bob 631-262-9848

Widow/ Widowers/Divorced/Singles over 55
St. Hugh’s Widows and Widowers Interfaith Club will meet at 1pm, in the cafeteria on Tuesday, March 25 at St. Hugh’s School, 1450 New York Ave. Huntington Station. Enter from Pulaski Rd. New Members are welcome. $2 for non-members. For further information, call Lucy at 427-7645.

Part Time Positions available at Ronkonkoma Cenacle

*Receptionist PT Evenings and Weekends
*Phone Rep PT for Prayer Enrollment Weekdays. Computer literate, good phone manner, general office work, take orders via phone and internet. Resume required.
Email: mevans@cenaclesisters.org

“Long may our land be bright, with freedom's holy light; Protect us by Thy might, Great God, our King!”

Join over 600 proud Catholic American men of the diocese on Saturday, March 29, 2014 at Holy Trinity Diocesan High School for an amazing day that will inspire you to live everyday as a Catholic Patriot!
You can register online at www.catholicmensministry.net
Sign up now. There is limited seating available.
Eucharist, Anchor of My Prayer Life

Prayer, the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us, is the “vital and personal relationship with the living and true God” (2558). Prayer can happen anywhere, and at any time. In the celebration of the Eucharist, however, we pray in an incomparable way.

JESUS TEACHES US TO PRAY

Jesus modeled prayer. Throughout his earthly life, his intimate and loving relationship with God the Father could be seen by how he prayed. His disciples witnessed him praising and thanking God and calling upon “Abba,” his heavenly Father, for help. Frequently he took time to go to “a lonely place” and pray. He also went to the synagogue and the Temple, and shared in the prayerful rituals of the Jewish people.

Jesus formed his followers in the way of prayer. He urged them to be persistent in prayer and to avoid showing off their piety to gain recognition from others. He taught them that humility is essential to prayer. They were to use few words, but pray from the heart. When his disciples asked him, “Teach us to pray,” Jesus gave them the Lord’s Prayer—the touchstone of all Christian prayer.

Before his Passion and death, Jesus spent the night in intense prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. From the Cross, he cried out in the words of Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” These words of prayer from the Scriptures carried his anguish to God at the moment of his greatest pain and desolation.

After the Resurrection, the two disciples at Emmaus recognized Jesus as he “said the blessing” and broke the bread. Through this simple ritual of blessing the food they were about to eat, they knew him as the Risen Christ.

What does the example and teaching of Jesus on prayer show us about Eucharist?

THREE LESSONS FOR OUR PRAYER

First of all, Eucharist cannot be the sum total of our prayer. Just as Jesus went to “a lonely place” to pray, and recommended that his disciples spend time praying “in secret,” so we must continue to find time, outside of Mass, for personal prayer. In moments of immense suffering and times of great joy, passionate prayer may arise spontaneously. At other times, habits of prayer help us to remain attuned to God’s nearness and care for us.

Nevertheless, Jesus also treasured ritual prayer, communal prayer. Regular ritual prayer was part of the very fabric of his life, as it continues to be part of ours as Catholics. In the Eucharist we remember what Jesus said and did at a ritual meal—the Last Supper. Thus, second: private personal prayer is no substitute for liturgy. Sometimes one hears people say “I can pray at home. Why should I go to Mass?” Such an attitude finds no basis in the life of Jesus. Indeed, we encounter Jesus, as Risen Lord, when we break the bread of Eucharist.

Third, the prayerful approach to Eucharist is one of heartfelt humility as we enter into the presence of God. The movements of prayer found in the Mass—praising and adoring God, praying for our own needs or the needs of others, offering
thanks, or responding with gratitude after receiving Holy Communion—flow most freely when they are prayed with a humble heart.

**PRAYER AS GIFT**

St. Paul urged the community of believers to “pray constantly” and pointed to the action of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to pray. When we cannot pray, or do not know how to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us (see Romans 8:26-27). Such confidence in God’s initiative and God’s empowering role in our prayer has enabled Christians through the centuries to regard prayer as a gift. Even as we practice disciplines of prayer and strive to be constant and faithful in prayer, we know this would be useless if God did not desire a relationship with us first.

“The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depth of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2560).

**EUCHARIST, THE SACRAMENT OF CHRIST’S PRESENCE**

The Eucharist is the great liturgical prayer of the Church. Within the celebration, the sacrament of Christ’s presence, offered and received in Holy Communion, can have a profound effect on our whole life of prayer.

What happens when we receive Holy Communion? On the physical level we have eaten a bit of bread and taken a sip of wine from a common cup. Yet in faith we believe something more profound has taken place: the Risen Christ comes to us. The living and true God has given himself to us. God has taken the initiative. When we receive the Eucharist in faith, we respond to that initiative, saying yes: “Amen.”

The Eucharist anchors us each week, or even daily if that is our practice, in what is most important in life: our relationship with the Risen Lord. He continually seeks us. Despite our sins, he longs to enter our house and dwell with us. It says in the Book of Revelation: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). And when we leave Mass strengthened in faith, we have confidence that the Spirit of the Risen Lord, whom we have encountered in the Eucharist, will continue to guide and strengthen us each day of the week.

**REFLECT**

What moment in the liturgy do you find most prayerful? When you say “Amen” to the body and blood of Christ, what does that mean to you?

**ACT**

Take a few moments to pray before and after Mass. By preparing to celebrate Eucharist, we allow the celebration to blossom. After Mass, take a moment to be thankful for the ways you have experienced Christ’s presence in the liturgy.

**PRAY**

Loving God, thank you for giving us the Eucharist to anchor all our prayer in the gift of Jesus. Open my heart to a deeper relationship with him. Help us, through the Holy Spirit, to experience your nearness and say “Amen” to the life you alone can give.