

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

PARISH NEWSLETTER

FALL 2020

LIVE STREAM SCHEDULE

All our live streams are available on the parish Youtube page & web page.

SUNDAY

11am—Sunday Mass

12:30pm—Misa doménical en español

WEDNESDAY

12pm—Midday Prayer for Busy People

12:30pm—Oración del mediodía

SATURDAY

2pm—Vigil Mass with Father Tony from Sacred Heart University

IN-PERSON MASS TIMES

SUNDAY MASS

11am / 12:30pm en español

WEEKDAY MASS

Tuesday + Thursday 8:30am

WEDNESDAY PRAYER SERVICE

12pm / 12:30pm en español

CONFESSION

Presently, confessions are by appointment.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Weekdays 10am - 4pm

SFDS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OUR DOORS

Father Phil Kelly, Pastor

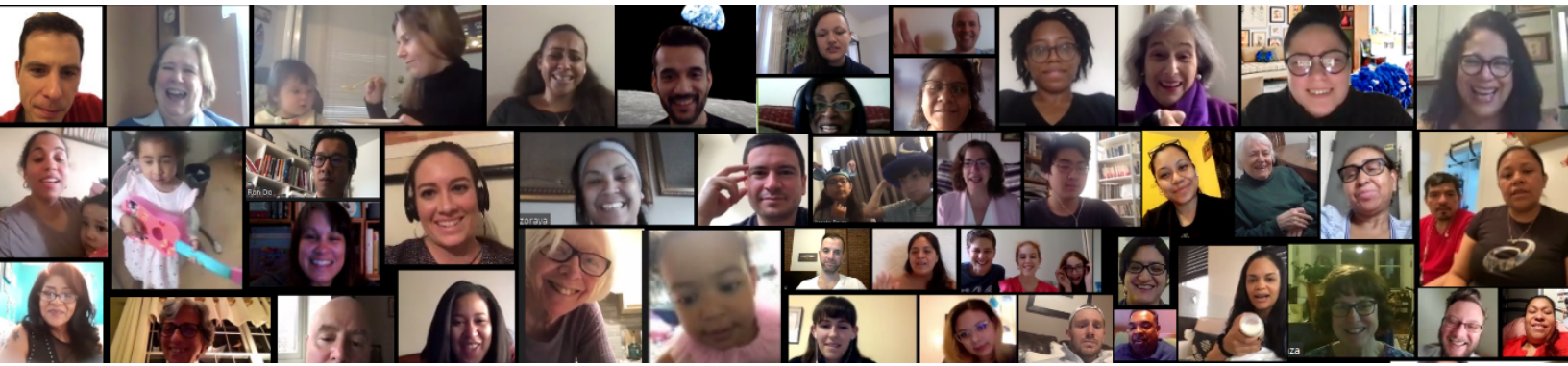


Welcome to our first parish newsletter! As you'll see in the subsequent pages, St. Francis de Sales has been busier than ever despite a pandemic drastically changing life as we know it in our city. Having now returned to in-person Masses for just over two months, we continue to "do church" in a new way: online. Through Zoom meetings, live streams, and social media, the majority of our ministries remain active—which is a good thing since the need to offer spiritual respite and compassionate support to our neighbors is at a critical high.

I invite you to read about our parishioners whose faith guides them towards extraordinary acts in their daily lives and to discern your own role as a steward of our spiritual household. While we all have questions about our future, with your support we can create at St. Francis de Sales an urban parish that thrives in the years to come.

“ZOOMING” AHEAD

Written by Jayne Porcelli, Pastoral Associate



When I left my office at St Francis on March 12, 2020, I had no idea that it would be three months before I'd be sitting at my desk in the parish again. We did not gather for Mass on Sunday March 15, we did not come together again in person for Mass until June 28. No one could have anticipated the dramatic changes in our lives that have come about since the beginning of these current pandemic days.

So much of our parish life happens in person, with one on one conversations with each other, in small groups, at meetings, when we are “church” together. It was difficult to envision how our parish would continue to move forward while we were all told to stay in our homes to keep one another safe and healthy.

I'm pleased to report that not only did we figure out how to continue to be church together, while apart, but we discovered we could grow and thrive by gathering virtually.

By now, everyone is familiar with the concept of a Zoom meeting. It is amazing how quickly we all adapted to this new technology, both personally and professionally.

For us as a parish family Zoom has been a life saver. With little to no lag time we transitioned most of our in person groups to virtual zoom events. Our adult initiation group (RCIA)

continues to meet at our regular time on Monday evenings, with folks coming in virtually from Texas, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, New Jersey and the West Side. We even had Fr Willie Reynolds pop in for a visit from Galway! God is so good, even as new people express their interest in learning more about our faith, we have been able to start a new group meeting for them. Our older students in Faith formation seamlessly continued their classes to prepare for Confirmation and they await the day when we will be able to celebrate their sacraments.

Our Young Adults created a Saturday Night Zoom Happy Hour and socialized virtually!

We transitioned our Baptism Preparation class easily to the Zoom format as well. We recently began celebrating baptisms again, privately with social distance protocols for families.

As an integral part of our parish life, our Hispanic parishioners used Zoom as well. With Lydia's able assistance our Spanish speaking leadership began two endeavors: they gathered the community together nightly to pray the rosary and as a leadership team they met weekly with parishioner Johna Till Johnson and other parish staff members, to learn and grow in their leadership skills and tech savvy abilities. Through the generosity of some other

parishioners we were able to ensure that all our Hispanic leadership team had appropriate technology to work with and learn on. All the while our sisters and brothers continued to check up on one another, especially the elderly in our community to make sure folks were safe and healthy.

Perhaps the Zoom meeting that was most transformative for us as a parish were the parish wide conversations we had during our time apart. Our first was an opportunity to ‘check in’ with one another and see how folks were coping in the midst of quarantine. Over 40 people joined in this conversation. It was a very thought provoking and prayerful experience. We agreed to meet up again two weeks later, having no idea that the world would change yet again at the death of Mr. George Floyd. That second conversation invited us all to consider how we would like to grow in our awareness of anti racism, both as individuals and as a parish.

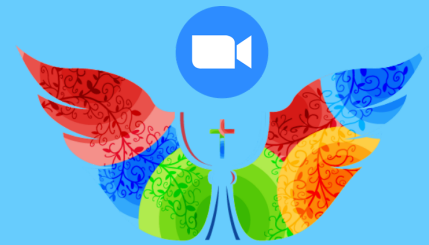
We are proud to say that our Sunday Masses never stopped. Even while we couldn't gather as a community in person, we continued our Sunday Mass in both English and Spanish either as a pre-recorded Mass or as a live streamed liturgy. Our digital team members have learned quickly and learned a great deal, and continue to gain knowledge about how to produce the best quality for our Masses. We

“ZOOMING” AHEAD (continued)



acknowledge gratefully their work, because we know that even while we are allowed to gather again, in person, there are many of us who, for a variety of reasons, will continue to watch Sunday Mass and participate from the safety of their homes for the foreseeable future. Our families and youngsters had to adjust quickly to their new reality as students this spring. We count ourselves fortunate that they could use virtual technology to finish their academic year on line. Trusting this, we have made plans to create a new version of our Faith formation process for families, moving forward. Since we don't know what our reality will be, we are planning for a both/and scenario. Our classes will combine, safety guidelines permitting, a combination of in person and virtual class. Each week we will welcome two grade levels for in person classes, allowing for plenty of safe spacing. While these students meet with their teachers and enjoy the benefits of face to face time with their peers, their parents will also enjoy the same, meeting in a small group with a pastoral team member. We will use this time to help parents feel more comfortable leaning into their role as first educators of the faith for their children. “The family is its own kind of Church, a sort of “domestic Church”. In this household setting, where relationships are the stuff of daily life, for better or worse, members ought to witness to each other and teach each other to listen to

the Spirit prompting them in their hearts.” (Vatican II: Lumen Gentium, 11)The weeks when students are not present for class at the parish, they will attend virtual classes with their well trained catechists from the comfort of their homes. We plan on staying ahead of the curve in every way possible as we re envision what vibrant parish life looks like as we step into an uncertain future. It has been said “we don't know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future.” Let us continue to trust in God to guide us and, in the words of our patron, St Francis de Sales, let us continue to LIVE JESUS...on 96th St, on Zoom, and wherever we find ourselves.



zoom

GET CONNECTED @ SFDS

LITURGICAL MINISTRY

- LECTORS & USHERS–
participating in-person at Sunday Masses;
contact lydia@sfdsnyc.org
- SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY–
contact sjm@sfdsnyc.org
- DIGITAL MINISTRY–
opportunities for remote projects and
in-person video production.
contact lydia@sfdsnyc.org

MINISTRY GROUPS

- BOOK CLUB–
meeting monthly online.
contact [sfdbookclub@gmail.com](mailto:sfdsbookclub@gmail.com)
- CABRINI COALITION–
outreach to our immigrant neighbors
contact cabrinicoalition@gmail.com
- GRUPO HISPANO DE SFDS–
www.sfdsnyc.org/sfds-en-linea
- YOUNG ADULTS OF SFDS–
Join our Facebook group page
to learn more: [@youngadultsSFDS](https://www.facebook.com/youngadultsSFDS)

ADULT FAITH FORMATION & RELIGIOUS ED FOR KIDS

contact jayneporcelli@sfdsnyc.org

- Catholic Initiation (RCIA)
- Inquirers Discussion Group
- Prayer with Ignacio House/Thrive for Life
Prison Project



PARISHIONER SPOTLIGHT

GET TO KNOW THE #SFDSFAMILY

View this video series online:
sfdsnyc.org/spotlight



SPOTLIGHT ON... **Kristin M.**

Learn about the faith journey that brought Kristin to SFDS and about her active involvement as a Board Member for BUTTERFLIES USA INC, a non-profit doing amazing work with children in India. Butterflies' approach empowers street and working children by helping them to develop their 'voice' through child-led cooperatives including a bank, a health and sports cooperative with child health educators, and an education cooperative where kids study together and coach each other.



SPOTLIGHT ON... **Lorena S.**

Lorena Sánchez, owner of the ☕GOOD MORNING COFFEE CART☕, chats with us about her job and her role as a leader within our parish family. Lorena S. has been sharing her beautiful smile and delicious coffee with our uptown community for over a decade. Visit her on the northeast corner of Lexington and 116th Street and be sure to ask for her new special, the "sandwichito de San Francisco!"



SPOTLIGHT ON... **Carmen G.**

Face masks are a new part of what we wear daily so we tapped into our pool of talented parishioners—in this case Carmen G, fashion industry professional—for a webinar in how to make your own face mask at home. Her informative tutorial takes us step-by-step in making our own face masks for individual use.



SPOTLIGHT ON... **Dr. Helen F.**

We checked in with our parishioner Helen F. during the height of the shutdown. She's been working on the frontlines as a doctor at Mt. Sinai Hospital. Not only is she administering much-needed care, but she also organized a technology drive to connect coronavirus patients to their loved ones.

SFDS MOURNS TOM TAAFFE

Written by Jayne Porcelli, Pastoral Associate

As a parish community we join with the Taaffe family in mourning the loss of their patriarch, our dear brother, Tom. To say that Tom was like a cornerstone in this community of faith would be an understatement. Praying here and celebrating his faith at St Francis was integral to who Tom was as a man of faith. As often happens when we grow older, those in the generations that follow us know little of the life we've lived. Therefore, it is with joy and gratitude that we share with you some highlights from the life and times of Tom Taaffe.

One of the many truths that can be said about Tom was that he had a passion for education. He believed to his core that access to education and knowledge was a fundamental right for all persons. He himself had not one but two PhD's! The first, in Philosophy, no surprise there. The second, earned at the age of 65, in comparative literature. Even as he was recuperating from knee surgery this year he was actively inquiring about a course of studies in theology at Fordham University. According to Elinor Shea, o.s.u., it was at the College of New Rochelle that he, along with colleagues, created the College of New Resources. This was one of the first programs of its time designed to serve the needs of non traditional students. Within a year there were two sites open, serving the needs of working mothers and all sorts of adult learners throughout the city. As time went on Tom also taught at SUNY/F.I.T and Manhattanville College. Tom was such an avid learner himself and loved language and poetry. His daughter Siobhan said that it was the love of one particular poem that caused Tom to teach himself how to speak Dutch, just so he could read this poem as it was originally written!



I was happily surprised to learn that Tom in his youth was a Freedom Rider in Mississippi. He lived and breathed Civil Rights to the very core of his person. He worked for Voter Registration rights in the 60's and took his young daughter Siobhan to many civil rights marches in DC. Martin Luther King, jr was such a hero of his that Siobhan's middle name is Martine! Tom held onto a fundamental sense of justice and righteousness, and maintained a hope for our country, despite at times feeling the deepest anger at what he witnessed happening in our society. As a young man Tom entertained thoughts about the priesthood, but ultimately felt a larger call to the work of justice and peace all around him.

One of the roles Tom treasured most in his life was that of being a grandfather to his grandson, Thomas. Anyone who saw the two of them together was witness to the great love they have for one another. I deliberately use the present tense here, as his grandson reminded me that his grandfather still is a wonderful person, this hasn't ended just because he is no longer present to him in the same manner. In speaking with young Thomas about his grandfather, what was obvious was the way the two of them doted on one another. Thomas told me stories of trips to Maine, to the beach, to favorite restaurants with Tom. Stories of the two of them talking endlessly about anything, of each one spoiling the other with attention. They were happiest when they were together, just the two of them.

Many of us knew Tom as the granddad who brought donuts to Frank's Café after Mass. Had we but known Tom was a fantastic cook/chef, once owning a catering business with his best friend, we certainly would have made some special requests over the years! Tom could always be counted on to participate in any of the community gatherings hosted by the parish, but especially anything that involved prayer and meditation. In spite of the fact that he was blessed with the Irish gift of conversation, (his family says of him: "if you ask him what time it is, he'll tell you how the watch was made!") he loved gathering with others in prayer and reflection. Our Wednesday morning Small Christian Community was blessed by his presence.

We can think of no better way to remember Tom than by closing with a quote from his daughter Siobhan, "the great journey of Tom's life was to find his relationship with God. He wasn't perfect, but every day he tried to be better".

SFDS STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Written by Lydia Serrano, Director of Communications and Stewardship

The world we currently inhabit is very different from the one we entered into back in January, and our church finances are not immune. Thanks to our already established Digital Ministry and online giving platform, SFDS was better poised than other organizations entering into the pandemic. However, the realities of the current economic landscape are now impacting our finances: we've experienced a 22% decrease for the period of March-May between this year and last, and this downward trend has grown drastically in subsequent months. As a diocesan parish in a city already greatly affected, we cannot count on outside help from the government or Archdiocese to make up for this loss in donations.

Each of us, on a personal level, is commissioned through baptism to participate in the Church's mission by offering our talent and treasure for the glory of God. Recognizing that our decline in donations is commensurate with the number of parishioners suffering economic hardship and that many have left the City, one way to offset losses is for those who are able to increase your personal giving during this time.

*"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers,
but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household."
– EPHESIANS 2:19*

MINISTRY DURING COVID: OUR CHURCH NEVER STOPPED

Looking back on the last several months, the SFDS family can feel proud that active ministry continued throughout the shutdown as we prayed and discovered new, creative ways to stay connected and offer spiritual support to our community.

Pictured below are concrete examples of stewardship in action. Beyond maintaining the physical structure of the church building, SFDS is invested in developing faith-filled Catholics of all ages and utilizing the best modern practices to spread the Word. We actively engage inside our doors and within our neighborhood to energize new followers, serve the needy, and promote the tenets of Catholic Social Justice.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Special Gifts—The economic landscape has changed for many, a result of which is a significant number of parishioners who have left NYC either permanently or for an extended period of time. If you have not been adversely affected, increasing your regular donation or making a special contribution to SFDS means that we can continue to maintain our strong pastoral presence.

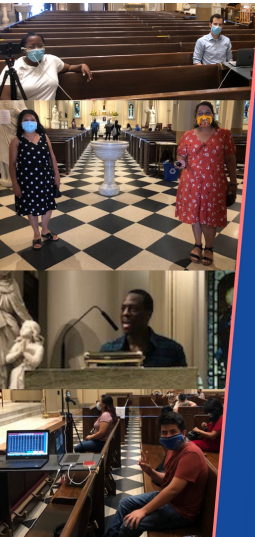
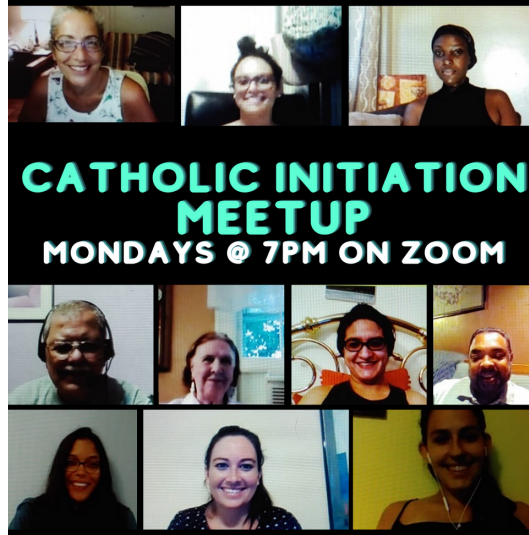
Online Giving— sfdsnyc.org/give - If you haven't already done so, this is THE most consistent and reliable way to give back to SFDS. By setting up a recurring gift, you become a stakeholder in the creation and maintenance of the community to which Jesus calls us. This allows us to be financially healthy and responsible so that we can plan ahead and fulfill our mission.

It is up to us as a family of believers to support the kingdom of God on 96th Street and continue the 125 year old legacy of our church. With God's help and yours, we will thrive as a vibrant and unified parish that breaks bread together for many years to come.



**"RICH AND POOR HAVE
THIS IN COMMON: THE
LORD IS THE MAKER OF
THEM ALL."**

PROVERBS 22:2




OPEN CALL:

Video production
Lectors
Ushers

We invite those who are attending SFDS in-person to try a new ministry!

Many are not back yet, so we need new faces to assist on Sundays.

Together, we can be socially distant yet spiritually unified!

 No experience necessary. Training provided.

Contact: lydia@sfdsnyc.org

**"LET US NOT TIRE OF
PREACHING LOVE; IT
IS THE FORCE THAT
WILL OVERCOME THE
WORLD."**

- SAINT OSCAR ROMERO




DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

**JOIN US FOR INQUIRY...A NIGHT OF Q+A FOR ALL
THOSE ASKING THE BIG QUESTIONS.
EVERY OTHER MONDAY @ 7PM**

e-mail jayneporcelli@sfdsnyc.org for Zoom meeting details. 

**"Do not conform yourselves to this age
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that you may discern what is the will of God"**

-ROMANS 12:2



**ST. FRANCIS
DE SALES**

WHERE THE UPPER EAST SIDE AND EAST HARLEM MEET
135 East 96th Street, New York, NY 10128 (corner of Lexington) | 212-289-0425

sfdsnyc.org