Upcoming at the Casa

New Year’s Retreat  
With Fr. Tom Nguyen  
Monday, December 30 – Wednesday, January 1

Migrants and Justice and Bees, Oh My! Retreat  
With Martin Marklin  
Friday, January 17 – Sunday, January 19

Veterans Reconnect Event  
With Jamie Valderrama  
Thursday, January 30, 7 - 8:30 pm
Joy to the World

How is your Advent going? This third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete Sunday, and we light the pink candle around our wreaths. Gaudete is the Latin word for “Rejoice!” As we continue this time of waiting and preparation for Christmas, I think it’s important to ask ourselves how much joy we have this time of year.

I can tell you that right about now, I’m feeling more than a little overwhelmed with holiday concerts, shopping for loved ones, preparing for liturgies, service opportunities, and planning time spent with family and friends. Does that sound familiar? If so, I think it’s time we all take a little break. This Gaudete Sunday offers us the perfect opportunity to remember what this season is all about. Primarily, I need to slow down and listen to the story.

The God who spoke being into existence at the beginning of time has been reaching out to humanity through every beautiful corner of creation around us. Love, itself, has been striving to make itself known, but we are busy people and scarcely make time to listen. In time, God’s Word took on flesh and a human nature to be even more present to us. God could have come as a mighty warrior, riding a lightning bolt from the clouds. But that’s not His style. Instead, He chose humility, simplicity, and poverty, coming as a child laid in an animal’s food trough. Out of love, He came to be with us and to show us how to live well.

Take a moment today. Consider what your loving Father would like to say to you. Hear the praise Jesus wants to give you. Live into that beloved existence. Hold on to it this week. Let it fill you with joy.

Peace,

James Whitaker
Youth and Young Adult Minister
Blessing the Family Christmas Tree

Before Christianity came to be, trees that remained green all year round warded off evil spirits and were special to people during the winter. It wasn’t until the 16th century in Germany that trees were brought inside and decorated.

You may bless your tree as soon as you put it up, or you can wait until after you have decorated it. When you are ready to do the blessing, gather everyone around the tree and designate someone to lead the following prayer.

Leader: Loving God, we stand before You once again. We stand here ready to celebrate the birth of Your son, Jesus. Bless this tree, this sign of life and freshness and perseverance in our midst. It stands as a reminder that You are born anew in us each day. Bless our family and friends as we celebrate this joyous season. Keep us safe in our travels, keep us kind in our conversations, and keep us gracious in our giving and receiving. We ask this in confidence, because we know You love us.

All: Amen.

Then, all can join in singing a favorite Christmas carol, such as “O Christmas Tree” or “Joy to the World.”

Volunteers: please complete your Safe Environment Training online renewal

The Casa is taking a more proactive stance in the safety of the community. In this time of concern throughout the Church, organizations like the Casa must demonstrate the highest integrity in this matter. In order to have credibility, every employee and volunteer—both new and someone who has served for a long time—must participate. December 31 is the deadline to complete this requirement.

A call for Christmas volunteers

With Christmas approaching, extra Hospitality Ministers are needed to serve our community members and visitors at our Christmas Liturgies. Your help is greatly needed and appreciated. If you would like to help with greeting worshippers, please sign up at the tables in the Hospitality area.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to serve!

Christmas 2019 Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve
Tue., Dec. 24
4 & 6 pm outside in Palm Court
8 & 10 pm inside the church

Christmas Day
Wed., Dec. 25
9 am & 11 am inside the church

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Advent is a good time to celebrate this sacrament as we prepare for Christmas: the proclamation of God’s great love for us! Opportunities for confession are:

- Tue., Dec. 17 9 - 11 am, 6 - 8 pm
- Thurs., Dec. 19 9 - 11 am, 5 - 7 pm
- Sat., Dec. 21 8:30 - 11 am

Come and experience the peace that comes from hearing the beautiful words of absolution.
**Family Faith Formation**

**Third Sunday of Advent Dec. 15**

**Reflection:** It's all about joy! The blind can see, the lame can walk, and the dead are raised! What joy must have filled the heart of John the Baptist as he heard these words from Jesus. The Church celebrates this joy on the third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday. Pink replaces the penitent purple; the readings sing of God's goodness, and rejoicing fills the air. Christmas is coming soon! Our Lord and Savior is near. While rejoicing, we need to remember that someone prepared the way for Gaudete Sunday and Christmas. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. We, too, have prophets in our lives who help prepare the way for us in order to help us on our faith journey. The prophets do not predict the future, but instead speak God's word to call us to a life of courage and faith and love. Look around—who are the prophets in your life?

**Conversational:** How do you bring joy to people?

**Proclamation/Discussion:**

Read Matthew 11:2-11.

- At the beginning of this Gospel, where is John the Baptist?
- What does John want to know about Jesus?
- How does Jesus answer John?

**Action:** Celebrate this day by wearing pink—even boys can wear pink ties, socks, or shirts! By doing this, you show your family that they can wear their faith as well as live it. Be creative and spread your joy today. When lighting the pink candle today, ask each member of the family how they can bring joy to someone today.

**Concluding Prayer:** O God, You speak to us in many ways. Thank You for sending holy people to speak in Your name. Amen.

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**Illuminated Prayer!**

Yes, coloring can be a form of prayer! Join us in a wonderful prayer experience this Advent. Stop by the Hospitality area where each week a professional coloring poster for that Sunday will be available. This 3' x 2' poster has plenty of places to color. Choose one or two, then while coloring, lift up someone (or something) that is in need of prayer. We provide the crayons, markers and colored pencils, you provide the prayers! This is for all ages and stages! Let your inner child run wild in creating!

**Baby It’s Cold Outside!**

The temperatures are dropping, and most of us have a warm house to sleep in. Unfortunately, there are still too many people in Phoenix whose “home” is on the streets. No heating, no comfortable bed, sometimes no shelter at all. This Christmas, please join us in collecting blankets and sleeping bags for our brothers and sisters who are in need of warmth. All blankets will be donated to André House and then passed out to those in the most need. The more blankets collected, the more people stay warm.

Bring your blanket to whichever Christmas Mass you attend, use it to keep warm outside, then drop it into one of our collection bins. You can also drop off at the front desk by putting the blanket into the André House blanket bin.

**Looking to grow your Angel wings?**

Volunteers are needed to help collect blankets at all the Christmas liturgies. Leave your contact information at the Front Desk for James, Donna, Patty.

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For Baptisms, Sacramental Preparation and Family Catechesis, contact Patty Tafolla at 480.355.0359 or dcm@thecasa.org; Donna Kinzie at 480.355.0344 or donna@thecasa.org; for Youth Ministry contact James Whitaker at 480.355.0343 or youth@thecasa.org
Casa Grounds for Solidarity

Fair trade coffee makes a great stocking stuffer!

When Casa volunteers sell Café Justo brand coffee, rural Mexican farmers and roasters earn a fair wage that allows them to remain in their homeland with a better quality of life. Café Justo is excellent, pure, organic coffee. Purchase some for yourself or as a gift. It’s a win-win situation—better coffee for the consumer and a better life for the grower.

Our own Casa Grounds for Solidarity ministry supports the mission of Fair-Trade coffee through their sales. Learn more about this ministry at casagrounds@thecasa.org.

— Pat Bennier, Director of Volunteer Services

For volunteer opportunities, contact Pat Bennier at volunteer@thecasa.org or 480.355.0361

Thank you for your stewardship!

Mass Offerings

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We received 286 collection envelopes.

Books and Blessings

bookstore & spiritual boutique at the Casa

Featuring original art, gifts, jewelry, statuary, greeting cards and books that feed the heart and soul. Located in the Capistrano building.

Monday - Wednesday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Thursday - Saturday 10:00 am - 6:30 pm
Sunday 8:30 am - 2:00 pm and 5:30 - 8:30 pm

Please stop by. We look forward to serving you! Visit us online at Booksandblessingsgiftshop.com.

For more information about our Counseling Ministry, please call 480.948.7460, ext. 134 or email: counseling@thecasa.org
BLANKETS FOR ANDRÉ HOUSE
December 24 & 25

There are many people who are homeless, and a warm comforting blanket is a treasure that will be greatly appreciated. Two ways you can help:

1. Plan to volunteer for 15 minutes after Mass collecting and transporting blankets to the storage room. If you can volunteer, contact Patty Tafolla at dcm@thecasa.org.
2. Consider donating a blanket for those experiencing the cold Arizona nights.

Blankets can be new or used. You can use it at an outdoor Mass and then fold and place in the bins. Or donate new blankets and place in bins.

Border Immersion
January 18 - 20, 2020

The Faith in Action Ministry, along with Fr. Sam Nasada, is developing a trip to the border area of Douglas, AZ/Agua Prieta, Mexico. This trip will allow Casa community members to meet the Franciscan community in Elfrida, AZ and cross the border to better understand the work being done to support migrants and those who live in Agua Prieta.

The trip will depart the FRC at 7:30 am on January 18 and return at 7:30 pm on January 20. Total cost is still unknown due to travel details not being finalized. If you are interested in participating, please email Patti or Sam. If you hope to attend, now is the time to get your passport in order.

The Casa Habitat Ministry
A Home Is Where the Heart Is

Wear closed-toe shoes and regular work clothes in layers. The construction crew must be at least 16 years old.

2020 Build Dates: 7:30 am start
*January 18, 2020 - Begin Doors & Trim
*January 25, 2020 - Build with Caritas Coalition

To build, email: thecasahabitat@thecasa.org.

Support Casa Habitat through Arizona Tax Credit.
If you cannot volunteer your “time and talent” in building with Casa Habitat Ministry, please consider contributing a bit of treasure. By donating to Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona and indicating your donation is on behalf of The Franciscan Renewal Center’s Habitat Ministry (on the memo line), you will receive a dollar-for-dollar credit toward your Arizona income tax payment. More details are on the Casa Habitat webpage.

St. Francis of Assisi bequeathed to us a profound, yet simple, symbol of the Incarnation in the representation of the nativity scene. God comes to us as a human infant, vulnerable and poor. Through reflection on the nativity, we encounter the Divine Presence and experience our connection to one another in Christ.

Visit several of the ministries representing Faith In Action at the Casa Creche Festival. Find out more about the ministries and how they help us connect in compassion and love with one another.

Visit the Community Life Center to view dozens of nativities from around the world.

For more information about Faith in Action Ministries, contact us at 480.948.746. Patti Sills-Trausch at x130 or socialconcerns@thecasa.org, or Laura Libertore at x156 or laura@thecasa.org.
A New Year . . . . NEW Programs!

Feb. 1  Balancing Body, Mind & Spirit
Feb. 8  Peace Within & Walking the Labyrinth
Feb. 8  Franciscan Vision Series: Laity As Co-Creators of the Franciscan Tradition
Feb. 15 Introduction to Centering Prayer
Feb. 20 Jesus As Prophet in Christian-Muslim Dialogue
Feb. 21 God's Mercy: Reflections from Medieval Women
Feb. 22 Spirit and Life: New Spiritual Insights on The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi

New Year's Retreat
Monday, Dec. 30—Wednesday, Jan. 1
Fr. Tom Nguyen

Each year that is given to us is a gift from God. They are filled with memories, lifegiving moments as well as struggles and challenges. God is there in each passing moment and as we step forward towards a new year. We invite you to come on this New Year's Retreat to remember the past, find new ways to enter into life's meaningful moments and recognize that God's love for us can make all things new.

Fee: $135 commuter, includes meals; with lodging $250 single, $150 double per person. Pre-registration required.

Introduction to the Nonviolence Leadership Certificate Program Luncheon
Sunday, Jan. 19
12:15 - 2:30 pm
Br. Scott Slattum, OFM

Learn about the Casa's Certificate Program in Nonviolence Leadership, focused on facilitating nonviolent dialogue and action.

Fee: $20 per person, includes lunch. Pre-registration is required.

Migrants and Justice and Bees, Oh My! Retreat
Friday, Jan. 17—Sunday, Jan. 19
Martin Marklin

Honey bees offer us a model of Christian living through their highly social communities that labor in harmony for a common goal. This unique and interactive retreat blends lively presentations, reflections, discussions, engaging prayer, and hands-on workshops. Come be inspired by observing a live beehive, savoring fresh honey, and taking home a handcrafted beeswax candle.

Fee: $135 commuter, includes meals; with lodging $250 single, $150 double per person. Pre-registration is required.

For more information or to register for any of these programs please visit thecasa.org or call 480.948.7460 ext. 132
Veterans Reconnect Event
Thursday, Jan. 30, 7 - 8:30 pm
Jamie Valderrama
Are you an active duty military member, veteran or veteran supporter? If so, come join Jamie Valderrama, lecturer and undergraduate coordinator for the Integrative Health Initiative at Arizona State University as she takes members of the military and their friends through a journey of self-awareness and empowerment via the growing field of mindfulness.

Fee: Free. Pre-Registration is greatly appreciated.

Introduction to Biblical Archaeology
Friday, Jan. 31, 9 am - Noon
Kathy Feld
Step into the physical world of the Bible and Jesus’ time through Biblical Archaeology. Come discover what the Franciscans began 800 years ago and continue today. Journey with Kathy in the class from Dan to the Negev Desert with stops at fascinating archaeological sites along the way. Discover the culture, living conditions, writings, language and politics of Jesus’ time through Biblical Archeology. With these tools, the Bible comes alive!

Fee: $45 per person, includes lunch. Pre-registration required.

Balancing Body, Mind & Spirit
Saturday, Feb. 1, 9 am - 4 pm
Don Fiore
Learn how to strengthen your body through easy physical movements and good nutrition, and sharpen your mind with Feng Shui principles in this all-day workshop.

Fee: $60 per person, fee includes lunch. Pre-registration required. Limited to 25 participants.

Peace Within & Walking Labyrinth Meditation
Saturday, Feb. 8, 9 am - 3 pm
Kebba Buckley Button
This class introduces meditation methods, breath techniques, and finger and hand holds, plus development of your personal meditation space.

Fee: $45 per person, includes lunch. Pre-registration required.

Saturday, Feb. 8, 9 - 11 am
Darleen Pryds, PhD
Lay Franciscans can often be forgotten, but they are actually the majority of Franciscan practitioners. Explore the rich variety of ways in which laity have followed the Franciscan Charism from its inception.

Fee: $95 per person. Pre-registration required.

Introduction To Centering Prayer
Saturday, Feb. 15, 9 - 1 pm
Sharon Taszarek and Carole Whittaker, PhD
This workshop will provide the foundation for developing a personal practice of Centering Prayer as a practice that leads to contemplation.

Fee: $35, snacks and refreshments provided; lunch is not included. Pre-registration required.

The Joy of Journaling
Saturday, Mar. 14, 9 am - Noon
Bonnie Wasniewski
Come for a morning that will give you basic knowledge, tools and that little nudge that can help you discover the joy of journaling and get you started writing!

Fee: $45 per person, includes lunch. Bring your favorite pen and journal or paper. Pre-registration required.
FACT: Why the TAU Society is so important to the Casa

When the community and the leadership of the Casa came together and decided that the time had arrived to build our new church, Father Joe Schwab, our Executive Director, and Charlie Brown, our General Manager, didn’t stop there and call it a day. They met with the Casa Board of Directors and other Community Leaders and agreed that capital building funds must also be backed with unrestricted operational funds to sustain what was to be created. We call this group our TAU Society. As we continue to grow here at the Casa, we know that the TAU Society and its increasing membership only becomes more pivotal to ensuring that all programs and services can continue on so that more people and families have that quiet sense of belonging that the Casa gives to all who seek it.

The church is up and operating, more people are coming to be part of the community and the Community Life Center is open and welcoming—this is all very good news. We also now have 378 households and/or foundations who are part of the TAU Society, contributing a base of support of approximately $700,000 per year. This is good, too, but we need more community help in achieving our $1,000,000 base of support by the end of 2020. As you read this article, consider this—maybe the TAU Society is the vehicle to allow you to put your love for the Casa and all that it means to you and your family into a measurable way of giving back. After all, sustainability (A.K.A the TAU Society) is the spiritual underpinning of the tangible beauty that has been created here since 1951. The responsibility for keeping this oasis in the desert going belongs to each of us who call this our spiritual home.

— Sarah Privée, Major Gifts Officer and TAU Member since 2013

For information regarding the RENEWING LIVES initiative, please call 480.355.0357 or email sarah@thecasa.org

OUR SHARED LEGACY

During Advent, Pope Francis calls us to “enlarge the horizons of our hearts, to be surprised by the life that is presented each day with its newness.”

Every day at the Casa a new story unfolds, inviting us to give something of ourselves to another, even if it’s just a caring smile, a quiet prayer for healing, or a listening heart. Or, it may surprise us with the possibility of a new beginning, or a different experience of the world. These are everyday moments of grace at the Casa, reminding us of the beauty of being loved by God.

How can we ensure that the grace and goodness that surrounds us in this community will live on past our lifetimes? Join the members of the La Verna Legacy Society who together are doing something wonderful to create a legacy of God’s loving presence at the Casa. To learn more about becoming part of the legacy, please contact Mary Dunn, 480.355.0345, mdunn@thecasa.org. All are welcome!
Enter to win $500 for a Christmas wish! RelevantRadio.com/WISH

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About the Franciscan Renewal Center

In 1951, the Casa de Paz y Bien began as a Catholic retreat center in Scottsdale. Now, as the Franciscan Renewal Center (still affectionately called the Casa) we offer opportunities for spiritual growth, healing and transformation that move lives into the service of others.

The Casa was founded by and is today an active religious community of the Order of Friars Minor—part of the worldwide Franciscan family, following the footsteps of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi. The Casa is a wholly owned entity of the Franciscan Friars Province of Saint Barbara, based in Oakland, California, that works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix.

Activities at the Casa include daily Mass, Sunday services, private retreats, gathering space for non-profit groups, as well as volunteer ministries that assist the poor or vulnerable, empower individuals to improve their circumstances, care for the environment, and build community fellowship. Discover more at TheCasa.org or call 480.948.7460.

Faith Sharing Groups

Casa Prayer Partners Ministry petitions prayers and prays for our human family. Send requests to: CasaPrayerPartners@gmail.com.

Casa Rosary Prayer Group Tuesdays, 6 pm in the Meditation Chapel to share our prayer intentions, and those of the community.

Casa Singles Single, Divorced, Widowed—AGES 40+, meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7 pm. For more information and to be added to the email list, contact rick@thecasa.org.

Contemplative Prayer Thursdays, 7:45 am in the Meditation Chapel. All are welcome.

Cornerstone at the Casa Meditation Wednesdays 11:30 am in the Spiritual Direction/Cornerstone Center and Mondays 8:30 am in Room B. All are welcome.

Interfaith Healing Prayers: Saturdays, following 7 am Mass. Room varies—please contact Front Desk or healingprayer@thecasa.org. All are welcome.

Men in Spirit This group of Christian men meets the first Saturday of every month for 7 am Mass, breakfast, then discussion, study, lectures and guidance. Contact: Al Sapia-Bosch or Chuck Jirauch: MenInSpirit@thecasa.org.

The Order of Secular Franciscans (OFS) Peace Fraternity meets at the Casa on the second Sunday of the month from 2 - 4 pm. This canonical Order of the Catholic Church is open to lay Catholics. Contact: Pat Kennedy, OFS, at 602.284.9343.

Spiritual Direction

A spiritual director/companion is trained to listen and encourage you to explore a closer relationship with God through conversation, listening and prayer. If you are curious about spiritual direction at the Casa, or would like to make an appointment, please contact: Cathy Olds at 480.948.7460, x162 or spiritualdirection@thecasa.org.

Nonprofit Meetings and Conferences

Nonprofit organizations are offered an exclusively serene gathering place for meetings, conferences and special events. For more information about hosting your next nonprofit event at the Casa, contact Indra Rodney, Director of Meetings & Conferences at 480.355.5632 or indra@thecasa.org.

Upcoming Special Collections

Dec. 28, 29: Franciscan Missionary Union
Jan. 18, 19: Gospel of Life
Jan. 25, 26: Guaymas Mission Appeal

Mass Intentions

December 15, 2019 – December 21, 2019

Sunday: Pro-populo; John Weber; John Gallagher; Dan Welch

Monday: Bob O’Connell

Tuesday: Gwendolyn - H. B.

Wednesday: Gerald Schwartz

Thursday: Linda Seto Sbalchiero

Friday: Sean Tessmer

Saturday: Gerry Sullivan; Marie Charley

For weekly readings, please visit usccb.org.

Mass Intentions for Next Week

Sunday: Pro-populo; Cal Crane; Mitchell and Emily Osiol; Dan Welch. Monday: Mary Murrillo Rivera. Tuesday: Sean Tessmer, Esmaragdo Cassillas, Mike Flinn, Emanuella De Rosa. Wednesday: Mary Murrillo Rivera, Donna O’Donnel. Thursday: Kellen McMillin. Friday: Peter Osiol. Saturday: Lester Eschenbaum; Sean Tessmer.

The intentions listed here will be the intentions of the priest and will not be announced to the gathered assembly.

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