

Sunday, November 30, 2014
First Sunday of Advent



Sun. 30 Nov.	First Sunday of Advent, I Class
8:30 am	†Victoria Mercado
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	Helen Reslock
3:00 pm	Vespers & Benediction
Mon. 1 Dec.	Feria of Advent, III Class
7:00 am	†Bernard Veronio
12:15 pm	†Father Matthew Peraino
Tues. 2 Dec.	St. Vivian, Virgin & Martyr, III Class
7:00 am	†Virginia Dana
6:30 pm	Yolanda Lopez
Wed. 3 Dec.	St. Francis Xavier, Confessor, III Class
7:00 am	Jordan Aranas
12:15 pm	†Virginia Dana
Thurs. 4 Dec.	St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor, III Class
7:00 am	Andrew Beier
6:30 am	St. Monica Sodality
Fri. 5 Nov.	Feria of Advent, III Class
7:00 am	Ricardo Yumena
12:15 pm	Holy Souls
6:30 pm	Veronica Lopez
Sat. 6 Nov.	St. Nicholas, Bishop & Confessor, III Class
7:00 am	FSSP Priests
9:00 am	Bernadette Meauzé
Sun. 7 Nov.	Second Sunday of Advent, I Class
8:30 am	†Jacque Vezard
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	Charles Watts family
3:00 pm	Vespers & Benediction

Sick Calls

If anyone is in need of the Sacrament (i.e. homebound) please call the parish office. If it is an **emergency**, outside of office hours, dial (916) 455-5114, then press 1, and the priest-on-call will be paged immediately.

New to St. Stephen's?

Please stop by the office or bookstore and pick up a registration form. It is very helpful for us to have contact information for your family, even if you cannot come to St. Stephen's every week.
 If you do not have envelopes and would like them you can pick up a box in the bookstore. The use of envelopes is very helpful for our bookkeeping system.

Important Upcoming Dates

December 8—Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 December 12—Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
 December 13—Rorate Mass
 January 10—1st Communion Classes begin
 January 24—11th Annual Walk For Life
 April 13—Confirmation at 6:30 pm
 May 3—May Procession & Solemn Mass
 May 10—First Holy Communion
 May 30—FSSP Priestly Ordinations
 June 21-27—Camp Sacred Heart

Charity The Essence of Sanctity

Before we can begin to imitate God we must know who He is, and in what His perfection consists. Holy Scripture tells us, *God is charity*. It does not say, "in God there is charity," but "God is charity," that is, everything in God is love, God is essentially love. Now love, even human love, is a desire for what is good; to love is to desire the good of another; it is the act by which the will is drawn toward the good. In God, the infinite Being, love is an infinite will for good, and is directed toward infinite good, the divine essence which God possesses and in which He delights. This love, which is God, is therefore an infinite, complacent love of His own infinite goodness. Yet His embrace extends even to the creatures whom He creates, to communicate to them His own Goodness and Happiness. Infinite charity, which is God, turns therefore to creatures, bringing them into existence by an act of love which does not stop at the limited good they possess, but brings them back to the infinite good, the Trinity. In other words, God creates and loves them for His own glory.

We, poor creatures, are called to share in this sublime life of love which is God, and grace has been given us for this express purpose. St. Paul exhorts us, "Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as most dear children, and walk in love."

If we are to imitate God, our supernatural life must be essentially love, that is, a love of benevolence for God and a will directed toward good, loving that infinite good which He is, and loving all creatures for Him and in Him.

Charity is so essential in the supernatural life that on its presence or absence depends the Christian's state of life or death. He who does not possess charity, does not possess sanctifying grace either, because they are absolutely inseparable, "He that loveth not, abideth in death." On the other hand, he who possesses charity, also possesses grace and shares in the life of God. "He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him," and according to St. Thomas, "Charity...unites man with God so that he no longer lives for himself but for God."

The three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, are infused into the soul together with sanctifying grace. God is the object of all three, but "the greatest of these is charity." It is the greatest, because without charity there can be no Christian life; the greatest, because it will never end. Further, it is the unitive force which binds us to God and is a participation in that infinite charity which is God Himself. In fact, to the Pharisee who asked which was the greatest commandment of the law, Jesus answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment."

When our charity is perfect, it will keep us completely united to God and will direct all our activity to Him. Hence, in the measure that a soul is dominated by charity, it is mature in the supernatural life, and is holy, to a greater or lesser degree.

O my God, without Your help, how can I obtain a treasure as precious as charity? If you want my whole life to be one of charity, it is absolutely necessary that You, charity itself, come to transform my poor soul. My faults are obstacles to Your charity which should triumph in me. Give me grace to remove these obstacles with generosity, so that Your infinite charity may take entire possession of my nothingness.

(*Divine Intimacy* by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD)

An Easy Way to Become a Saint

There are people who say that they cannot love God. When they make an act of love and say, "Oh my God, I love You," they feel nothing in their hearts to correspond to their words. Their words sound hollow, cold and false. This is what they tell us themselves. Unfortunately, this happens to many, and as a consequence, they are losing every day of their Religion.

Why cannot they love God? There are four reasons:

First of all, they never ask God to help them to love Him.

Secondly, they do not realize, as we have said, what God is, His boundless goodness, His sweetness, mercy and love.

Thirdly, they do not understand how much He loves them.

Fourthly, they have no idea, of all that He has done for them.

Remark that when speaking of love we do not mean an emotional love, sentimental love; we speak of the solid love of God which comes from a clear, intelligent understanding of how good and sweet God is. He Himself tells us: "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is," and again, "My yoke is sweet, My burden light."

How, then, can we acquire the love of God?

First of all by prayer. Let us ask God every day and in every prayer we ever say to make us love Him. Let us offer every good act we do that He may give us this, the greatest of all graces, His blessed love. Our Lord has promised over and over again and in the clearest terms to hear our prayers. He cannot break His word. Let us begin at once and ask God every day of our lives with *unbounded confidence for His holy love*.

Secondly, to love God we must know Him. Our concept of God must be clearly a God of infinite sweetness, mercy and love, a God of compassion, who wishes to lift us up and wipe away the stains of sin from our souls. Above all, we must look on God as our most loving Father, our dearest Friend, a God to whom we must go in all our troubles and whose help we can seek in our needs. Then, we adore God, but with an adoration of love, like the Angels in Heaven, who are burning fires of love.

(Excerpt from *An Easy Way to Become a Saint*, by Fr. Paul O'Sullivan, O.P.)

Saint Francis Xavier Mission Trip
3 Trips for 2015:

1. Guadalajara, Mexico—Holy Week / Easter Week 2015 March 28—April 11. Cost \$900.00 plus airfare. Ages 16 and up. Or families (see website for more details)
2. Piura, Peru—July 28—Aug. 10 Cost \$2,300. (ages 16—21)
3. Piura, Peru—Aug. 14—24 Cost \$2,100. (ages 21 and up)

www.sfxmission.com
 SFXMission@gmail.com

Led by Fr. Heenan, FSSP & Fr. Lillard, FSSP
 Application deadline—*January 9, 2015

*This is a change from December 19, 2014

2015 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for next year are available for you to pick up in the vestibule of the church. If you do not see a box with your name on it and would like a set, please ask for them in the bookstore. Using weekly envelopes is very helpful to us, it eliminates a lot of extra paperwork, as all checks must be copied and recorded if they are loose.

11th Annual Walk for Life—Save the Date!
 Saturday, January 24, 2015

Bus tickets are still available — contact Mike at 916-335-4553 or Kathleen at 916-204-9125.

Parish Swap

Do you have some items that you no longer need? Now you can list them on a page linked to our website. Just contact Rose-Mary at ParishSwap@gmail.com - give her a description of what you have, and your contact information. It is also possible to send a picture to be posted.

To view what is available, just click on the "links" button on the front page of www.sacfssp.com

For more information call the parish office.

FSSP Calendars and Ordos

Fraternity of St. Peter calendars and ordos are available to purchase in the bookstore. Please get them early as we often run out.

First Communion Class—Registration

Registration is now open for 1st Communion classes which will begin on January 10th. Pick up forms in the bookstore or parish office.

9th Grade Religion Class Openings Next Semester

Fr. Perry's Religion class is open for next semester. The class follows the "Mother of Divine Grace" syllabus, and is held at 9:00 am on Tuesday and Thursday. Please call the parish office if you are interested.

Prayer for Priestly and Religious Vocations

Priest: Let us pray for priestly and religious vocations.
All: O God, we earnestly beseech Thee to bless the Church with many priests, brothers, and sisters, who will love Thee with their whole hearts, be faithful to their vocations, and gladly spend their entire lives to teach Thy truths, serve Thy Church, and to make Thee known and loved.

Priest: Bless our families, bless our children.
All: Choose from our homes those who are needed for Thy work.
Priest: O Mary, Queen of priestly and religious vocations:
All: Pray for us. Pray for our priests, seminarians and religious. Obtain for us the grace of many more. Amen.

(Please offer your reception of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month for vocations)

Prayer of Parents for Priestly and Religious Vocations

O God, grant that at least one of our sons may become a priest or religious brother, and one of our daughters a religious sister. We ourselves want to live as good Christians, and to guide our children always to do what is right, so that we may receive the grace, O God, to be allowed to give Thee a holy priest, brother, or sister! Amen.

(Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be)

(based on a prayer recited by the parents of Lu Monferrato, Italy)

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, John Reyes, Carlos Aldana, Liliana, Luz & Cesar Morales, Richard Corbin, Renee Burns, Sue McGrath, Ron Carlon, Michael Cuellar, Heather Cuellar, Msgr. Kavanaugh, Anaidel Perez Aravelo, Joan Blackburn, Luis Salazar, Bill Sneeringer, Norman Sayles, Lorraine Peterson, Sandy Sneary

...In Memoriam

†Charles Cantoni, †Manuel Nino, †Margaret Correa, †Cindy Yumoto, †Fr. Vladimir Kozina, †Philip Rutschow, †Jennie Tomasi