

Sunday, February 1, 2015
Septuagesima Sunday



Sun. 1 Feb.	Septuagesima Sunday, II Class
8:30 am	Ben Dana
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	Carrie Parker
3:00 pm	Vespers & Benediction
Mon. 2 Feb.	Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, II Class
7:00 am	†Sara Stelzer & †Melissa Kennon
12:15 pm	†Maggie Becker
6:30 pm	Special Intention
Tues. 3 Feb.	St. Blase, Bishop & Martyr, IV Class
7:00 am	Esperanza Cabral Ruiz
6:30 pm	Catherine Baccay
Wed. 4 Feb.	St. Andrew Corsini, Bishop & Confessor, III Class
7:00 am	Efrain & Eva Hernandez
12:15 pm	†Richard Alfred Becker
Thurs. 5 Feb.	St. Agatha, Virgin & Martyr, III Class
7:00 am	†Martha Pentland
6:30 pm	St. Monica Sodality
Fri. 6 Feb.	St. Titus, Bishop & Confessor, III Class
7:00 am	John Dana
12:15 pm	Sarah Cummings
6:30 pm	Mike Solton
Sat. 7 Feb.	St. Romuald, Abbot, III Class
7:00 am	Pat Feldman
9:00 am	Robert Ball
Sun. 8 Feb.	Sexagesima Sunday, II Class
8:30 am	Pat Feldman
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	Julia Pilegaard
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.

...In Memoriam

Please pray for all our Beloved Dead listed in our Memorial Book in the sanctuary.

Names are placed there at the beginning of each new year.

Important Upcoming Dates

February 2—Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 6:30 pm
 High Mass
 February 8—Annual Catholic Appeal
 February 13—High School Youth Group
 February 18—Ash Wednesday
 March 2—5 Lenten Mission—Fr. Anthony Mastroeni
 April 5—Easter Sunday
 April 13—Confirmation at 6:30 pm
 May 2—May Procession & Solemn Mass
 May 9—First Holy Communion
 May 30—FSSP Priestly Ordinations
 June 21-27—Camp Sacred Heart
 July 19—23—**Spiritual Exercises** - Annual Parish Retreat

Desire For Communion

The necessary and essential condition for Communion is the state of grace. Virtue and piety are advisable, but good will and an ardent desire may take their place. Unfortunately, people often go to Communion half-heartedly and with a very faint idea of what they are receiving. Therefore, that we may avoid this fault, let us consider, among the conditions suitable for Communion, the one that is first and most important in securing to us the fruit of the Holy Eucharist; that is, desire.

To be induced to eat we must be hungry; we must feel an imperative desire to take food if we do not want to faint from starvation. For the act of eating is troublesome and sensual, and the digestive process often tiresome and painful. The good God has consequently given us our appetite to make us desire nourishment, and He has given a pleasing taste to the various foods in order to attract us to them.

Similarly there is a hunger for Communion, a hunger for Jesus Christ, and it has its different degrees; but the keener it is, the more profitable is our Communion. A healthy stomach will desire food and digest it, whereas a sick stomach cannot retain anything.

This hunger for Communion God Himself must place in our hearts, else we should never wish to receive Him. So vast a distance is there between us and God that, of ourselves, we should never dare to approach the Holy Table if grace did not excite an urgent hunger within us, a hunger that makes us forget the infinite dignity of Jesus Christ and think of nothing but our own need. God causes our spirit to be absorbed by His grace in order that we may see not our own misery but His goodness, in order that we may forget who we are and Who He is.

Man lives by desire, seeking nothing, undertaking nothing of moment but what he has long desired. Well, a divine desire urges us to receive Communion, a desire so strong that it gives us courage to approach the Judge of heaven and earth without dying of fear. This hunger for God excuses our temerity. Surely, the poor unfortunate who takes a loaf of bread in order not to starve to death is not a thief; his need excuses him.

Perhaps you say, "But, I do not feel this desire." If you never receive Communion, that is possible; but if you do, I answer that God has kindled within you the desire for it; for if you did not have some desire, however small, you would not dare to communicate.

Tell me, what poor person, even though he were at the point of starvation, would dare go to dine at a king's table unless he were invited? Such a thing is unthinkable. Yet the distance which separates us from God is far greater; how then do we dare approach Him in Communion? In truth, it is necessary that Jesus Christ, in his infinite mercy, should veil our eyes before we can do in regard to Him what we would not do in regard to any great person on earth: we invite ourselves to His divine banquet.

The true reason, then, for receiving Communion is the hunger one feels for it. As this hunger becomes more acute, more urgent, go more frequently to Communion. If you are not growing spiritually, if you are not becoming stronger, you are not eating enough, or else you are eating without appetite. Arouse yourself, recognize your need at any rate, even if you cannot feel the hunger of love.

(Holy Communion by Saint Peter Julian Eymard)

The Sacrifice

When the Sanctus has been spoken and the Canon of the Mass begins, we should remind ourselves: "Now I shall witness, indeed partake in, what the ancient Church called *actio*, the essential act." We must give our full attention to it. As soon as silence reigns once again, we should say to ourselves: "The Lord's last will and testament is being executed. He said: 'As often as you shall do these things, in memory of me shall you do them.'" What happened in the room of the Last Supper is taking place here: Christ comes. He is present in His salutary love and in the destiny that it met. The priest acts, but we must act with him by being inwardly present, by watching him every moment at the altar table, identifying ourselves with his every gesture.

Then comes the Agnus Dei. The priest says the prayer of preparation for Communion and partakes of the sacred food. He then shows the faithful the Host, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world." And he gives it to those at the Communion rail. Thus another of the Lord's commands is obeyed: "Take ye all and eat this."

The priest acts and we act with him, following observantly, spiritually. Naturally, we must be genuinely active, not simply watchful. We must overcome the unconcern, sleepiness, indolence, and inertia which keep us from the sacred act so that we may enter into it vitally.

Composure alone enables us to do this. When the mind is not collected and the heart is restless and inattentive, the believer will be occasionally conscious of a word or gesture, or the bell will remind him that one of the high points of the Mass is at hand; never will he be in that state of active, watchful vitality which alone permits genuine participation. Liturgical action begins with learning composure. Everything else is important and fruitful only as long as it is rooted in self-collectedness.

Composure and the participation springing from it must be practiced. There is a much-aired opinion that only the prayer and religious act rising involuntarily from within are genuine. This is erroneous. Prayer and religious action are life. But life consists only partly in spontaneous acts; most of life is service and conscious effort, and both are at least as important as impulsive activity.

We so often use the phrase *church service*. Service does not imply action overflowing naturally from an inner need, but rather action performed in obedience at the appointed time. When it is service in God's sight rather than man's, it is not only external action but also—and preeminently—inner action, participation. Hence divine serving must be learned and practiced over and over again so that it may become increasingly vigilant, profound, true. Then we shall be granted also that living experience which is beyond all willing and practicing. We shall be seized and so drawn into the act of salvation that we will really exist in the memorial of the Lord, a work not of men, but of God. It is the imperishable reality of the salutary act, God-sent in the hour of the sacred ceremony that enters the world and time ever and again. Consciousness of this divine event is doubtless the greatest gift the Mass can give. It comes, however, only when God gives it. Our task lies in the effort and in loyalty of service.

(Meditations Before Mass, by Romano Guardini)

Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

Preached by Fr. John Lyons, FSSP

July 19-23

Registration is open for our annual retreat which will be held at Christ the King Retreat Center. Forms are available in the office or bookstore or you may print them from the parish web site.

The retreat is open to men and women age 18 and over. It will be particularly helpful to those discerning a vocation or other decision in their lives.

Space is limited and we have already had many inquiries, so hold your place as soon as possible.

Saint Francis Xavier Mission Trips

Piura, Peru: July 28—Aug. 10 *Application deadline - 2/ 9
 Piura, Peru: Aug. 14—24 *Application deadline - 2/ 9
 www.sfxmission.com SFXMission@gmail.com

High School Youth Group

The next meeting is February 13 beginning with the 6:30 pm Mass. Parents will be needed as volunteers. Contact Fr. Akers for more information.

Annual Catholic Appeal

The Annual Catholic Appeal collection will take place next Sunday, February 8th. This is the most important diocesan collection of the year. 25% comes back to our parish. Please be generous!

Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

If you are interested in buying candles to be blessed on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary stop by the bookstore and let us know. We will have 100% beeswax candles for purchase, you may also bring your own candles to be blessed. Make sure you bring them early (6:20 pm or earlier).

The blessing of candles will take place at the beginning of the 6:30 pm Mass on Feb. 2nd, we will then process into the church for Holy Mass. You will be able to pick your candles up following the Mass.

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)

Lenten Parish Mission, March 2nd—5th

Fr. Anthony Mastroeni from the Diocese of Paterson, NJ will preach our Lenten mission.

Father has been chaplain for Christendom College and Franciscan University of Steubenville. He was also a professor of the University of San Francisco Ignatius Institute.

We are very blessed to have Fr. Mastroeni come to our parish. Please save the date and invite family, neighbors and friends to come with you.

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, Carlos Aldana, Liliana, Luz & Cesar Morales, Richard Corbin, Renee Burns, Sue McGrath, Ron Carlon, Michael Cuellar, Heather Cuellar, Joan Blackburn, Luis Salazar, Norman Sayles, Lorraine Peterson, Sandy Sneary, Jeannemarie Crabtree, Michelle Di Giovanni & Children