

Sunday, December 28, 2014
Sunday in the Octave of Christmas



Sun. 28 Dec.	Sunday in the Octave of Christmas, II Class
8:30 am	Tish Gallagher
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	Mike Solton
3:00 pm	Vespers & Benediction
Mon. 29 Dec.	5th Day in the Octave of Christmas, II Class
7:00 am	†JoAnna Dieter
12:15 pm	Bill Munsill
Tues. 30 Dec.	6th Day in the Octave of Christmas, II Class
7:00 am	†Vivian Dickson
6:30 pm	Pati Obi
Wed. 31 Dec.	7th Day in the Octave of Christmas, II Class
7:00 am	Bates Family
12:15 pm	Juaquin & Estefania Sandoval
Thurs. 1 Jan.	Octave Day of Christmas, I Class
8:30 am	Jim & Monica Blazejack
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	St. Monica Sodality
Fri. 2 Jan.	Feria in Christmastide, IV Class
7:00 am	†Calixta Paranaque
12:15 pm	Bill Munsill
6:30 pm	†Capriana Costales
Sat. 3 Jan.	Saturday of Our Lady, IV Class
7:00 am	†Basilio Uclaray
9:00 am	Trespola Paranaque
Sun. 4 Jan.	Holy Name of Jesus, II Class
8:30 am	†Poblio Uclaray
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	Heidi Rutschow
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

January 3—Parish Christmas Party
 January 5—6:30 pm Mass followed by blessing of Epiphany water
 January 6—Epiphany of Our Lord
 January 10—1st Communion Classes begin
 January 24—11th Annual Walk For Life
 April 13—Confirmation at 6:30 pm
 May 2—May Procession & Solemn Mass
 May 10—First Holy Communion
 May 30—FSSP Priestly Ordinations
 June 21-27—Camp Sacred Heart

Jesus Our Mediator

During the Christmas days our thoughts, centered on Jesus, have revealed to us a little of the great "mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God," the mystery we now wish to consider in synthesis, in order to arouse in ourselves greater admiration for its "unfathomable riches."

The infinite distance between God and man, the impassable abyss, the breaking of every bond of friendship—all this was the tremendous consequence of sin. Then between God and man appeared the sweet Babe of Bethlehem; suddenly and completely the whole situation changes: distance is overcome, and across the abyss a wonderful bridge is erected which unites earth with heaven and re-establishes relations of intimacy between God and men. This bridge is Jesus, the "only Mediator between God and man," who "joins earth to heaven in a truly remarkable manner." In His office as Mediator, Jesus is really "at the center": He is the point of union between divinity and humanity. His mediation has all the qualifications necessary for perfectly pleasing God, since He Himself is true God; at the same time, because He is true man and, as such, represents the whole human race, Jesus can make worthy satisfaction to God for the entire debt of sinful mankind.

The divinity possessed by Jesus as the Word is united in His Person with the humanity He possesses as man. These two natures are not merely in juxtaposition, but they embrace each other; even more, they are united in one Person, the Person of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. In Him and through Him, all mankind is readmitted to friendship with the heavenly Father. In Him all can find again the way to reach union with the Trinity.

The eternal Father deigned to reveal this wonderful mystery to St. Catherine of Siena: "It is My wish that you consider the bridge I have built in the Person of my only-begotten Son, and that you notice that it reaches from earth to heaven, because in Him the majesty of the divinity is united with the lowliness of your human nature. It was necessary to construct this bridge in order to repair the road which had become impassable and to open a passage across the trials of this world to eternal life."

"For it hath well pleased the Father that in [Jesus] all fullness should dwell, and that through Him He should reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His Cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven." Jesus accomplished His work as Mediator on Calvary, where He shed all His Blood as the price of our redemption. But His work began at Bethlehem, where the Word took, so to speak, that ineffable "giant's step" which brought Him from heaven to earth, which made Him true Man as well as true God.

The terrible abyss which sin had produced between God and man has been filled up by the child who opens His arms to us from the manger. All that sin had spoiled and destroyed is now, by the will of God, saved, "re-established in Christ." Oh! How spontaneous is the need to praise and adore when the Child Jesus is contemplated in this light! Here, tenderness and admiration are one!

The grace which Adam had received directly from God, we now receive only through Jesus, our Mediator; our whole supernatural life always comes through Him. If we wish to be united to God, we have no other means than to attach ourselves to Jesus, to pass through Him, our Mediator, our Bridge, our Way. (*Divine Intimacy* by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD)

The Key to Approaching the Mystery of Jesus

When [Jesus] was on the Cross, with the end near, while His mother stood below, yet nonetheless bound to Him in all the torment of her heart, hanging, waiting on a word from Him, He said to her, with John in mind, "Woman, behold thy son," and to the beloved disciple, "Behold thy mother," Surely, it must have been troubling. But in her heart, she must have sensed the meaning of that other sentence: "Woman, behold thy son." He was telling her to be quit of Him. He was now wholly engaged in that "hour" which had come, great and terrible and demanding everything. In the ultimate, solitary presence of God with the sins of the world laid upon Him, before God's justice, there He was indeed quite alone.

Mary stood ever by His side. All that befell Him she shared. Indeed His life was her life. But not in the sense of intellectual understanding: "The Holy Spirit"—how full of meaning is that word *the* in the message of the Angel of the Annunciation, how pregnant with the mystery and remoteness of God! —the Holy Spirit came upon her "from on high," that which is great beyond measure. She gave the Holy Spirit all she had: her heart, her honor, her blood, and all her power of love. She enclosed the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit grew out and over her. A remoteness came upon her Son; the Holy Spirit, in whom He lived, apart from her.

In the end, she could not understand Him. How could she understand the mystery of the living God? But she did what in a Christian sense is almost equal to understanding, which can be done only by that same divine power which makes understanding possible: she believed. If anything shows her grandeur, it is the words of her cousin Elizabeth: "Blessed art thou who hast believed!" It accounts for her more than the other two phrases: "And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them," and again, "Mary kept all these words in her heart."

Mary believed. It was demanded of her that she constantly renew this faith, that it might become ever firmer, more bare of supports—greater. She had faith greater than anyone has ever had. Abraham underwent a terrible test of his faith, but more was demanded of her than of Abraham. For the Holy One sprang from her, grew away from her, went on past her—the Holy One, who drew His being from a different order, apart from her.

Yet she did not make a natural womanly underestimation of His greatness due to having borne Him, and nourished Him, and seen Him in His helplessness. She did not give in to a mother's usual temptation to demand of her son that she always remain mother. Nor was she to mistake her love for Him when he went forth from the simplicity of her protection. Above all she believed this was as it should be; the will of God was thus being fulfilled. She chose to persevere, to follow, through the power of faith, every step her Son took in all its unfathomableness. That was the measureless quality of her greatness.

Every step the Lord took toward His divine destiny Mary took with Him—not in the way of understanding, but in the way of faith. Let us open ourselves up to this.

(*Meditations on The Christ* by Romano Guardini)

Sunday Vespers/Benediction

Sunday Vespers takes place every Sunday at 3:00pm followed by Benediction. Pamphlets are available in the church entrance. "All should come to our churches and there sing the praises of God, and be enriched with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament" - Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*

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.

Meditation on the Nativity

Performed by Jacob Kasak
 December 28, 2014—after Vespers

A series of pieces depicting the Incarnation through the Holy Family's return to Nazareth upon King Herod's death.
 Potluck to follow

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.

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. Please call the parish office if you are interested.

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

Prayer to St. Joseph

V. He made him lord of his house.
R. And prince over all his possessions.

Let us pray:

O God, in Thy marvelous providence, Thou hast deigned to choose St. Joseph to be the spouse of Thy most holy Mother. We ask Thee to grant that we may deserve to have him for our intercessor in heaven, whom on earth we venerate as our protector; who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

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 Carlson, 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