

Sunday, December 23, 2012
4th Sunday of Advent



Sun. 23 December, 4th Sunday of Advent, I Class

8:30 am Angela Patch
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm †Msgr. Schons

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 24 December, Vigil of Christmas, I Class

7:00 am Holy Souls in Purgatory
 12:15 pm Fr. John Lyons, OMV

Tues. 25 December, The Nativity of Our Lord, I Class

12:00 am Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary
 8:30 am Joshua and Bridget Spears
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Confraternity of St. Peter

Wed. 26 December, St. Stephen, Protomartyr, II Class

7:00 am Catherine Patch
 12:15 pm Cecilia Patch
 7:00 pm Altar Guild

Thurs. 27 December, St. John, Apostle & Evangelist, II Class

7:00 am Archbishop José Gomez
 6:30 pm †Beatrice Solton

Fri. 28 December, Holy Innocents, Martyrs, II Class

7 am †Norma Lucio
 12:15 pm †Paul Harbaugh
 6:30 pm Lucia Patch

Sat. 29 December, 5th Day in the Octave of Christmas, II Class

7:00 am Ray Schlaier
 9:00 am Anthony Patch

Sun. 30 December, Sunday in the Octave of Christmas, II Class

8:30 am Chester Patch V
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm †Margaret Fetting

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, leave a message, and the priest-on-call will be paged immediately.

...In Memoriam

†Mark Trachera; †Fr. Lawrence Ryan (Sacramento Diocese);
 †Joseph Cortese; †Frank Farinha; †Cesar Chaves;
 †Msgr. Gerard Schons; †Rodolfo Servande; †Felice Johnson;
 †Jim Chun; †Aida Apaza; †Bessie Perez; †Robert Perez;
 †Richard Becker; †George Phillips; †Harriet Morton; †Nick Franusich

Important Upcoming Dates

Dec. 25—Christmas
 Dec. 26—St. Stephen Day—High Mass—Guild Award Ceremony
 Jan. 1—Octave Day of Christmas (Sunday schedule)
 Jan. 5—Blessing of Epiphany Water
 Jan. 12—1st Communion Class
 Jan. 26—Walk for Life
 Jan. 27—St. Maximilian Kolbe—Saint of Auschwitz
 Feb. 2—Skating Party
 April 14—Confirmation
 May 11—First Holy Communion
 June 1—Ordinations in Nebraska
 June 16—22—Camp Sacred Heart

The Word Was Made Flesh

The Word is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In the bosom of the one divine nature, there are three Persons, three subsistent relations. We too, are “subsistent”: “subsistence is that which permits me to say “I,” and to attribute to this “I” the various acts that I perform as a person. In God, in the divine nature, there are three relations who can say “I” in regard to the divine operations, operations which are common to all three, because they proceed from the one single nature, possessed by all and each one of the three divine Persons. The Word possesses the same divine attributes, such as infinity, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience—all the divine grandeur of knowledge and love which constitute the very life of the Blessed Trinity, and the external acts such as creation and preservation of creatures. The Word is God! St. John the Evangelist, in the beginning of his gospel, before speaking of the temporal birth of Jesus, presents to us the eternal generation of the Word...in the bosom of the Father, equal to the Father in all things, but distinct from Him. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Word is the one utterance of the Father—He expresses the Father *completely*. The Father, in giving the Word His whole essence and divine nature, also communicates to Him all the divine activity. Thus the Word is the efficient *cause*, the first principle of all natural and supernatural life: “All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made.” But the Word, the splendor of the Father, is not only life; He is also light, the *light* which reveals the greatness and mystery of God to men: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Natural life and the life of grace, light and knowledge of God—all come from the Word, who is God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

“The Word was made flesh.” As God, the Word is eternal and immutable; therefore, of necessity, He always remains what He was: *manet quod erat!* But nothing prevented Him, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, from creating in time a *human nature*, which instead of having a limited, weak *ego* like ours, was completely governed by its divine Person. And so it was done: the human nature assumed by Him is the same as ours, but instead of belonging to a *human person*, it belongs to a *divine Person*, to the subsistent Person of the Word; therefore, even the operations and passions of this human nature belong to the Word. Since the Incarnation, the word has a *two-fold nature*: the unique divine nature, which He possesses in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the human nature, which is of the same quality and has the same properties as ours.

The Word remains what He was—perfect God. Nevertheless, He does not disdain to assume our poor human nature, fallen through sin, “but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man. “This is the work of the immense charity of God, who being full of mercy for his poor creatures who had fallen into the abyss of sin, did not hesitate to decree the redemptive Incarnation of His only begotten Son. Thus the eternal Word comes to us like the good shepherd who leaves everything and goes down into the valley to look for the lost sheep. This is the fruit of the exceeding charity with which God has loved us!

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

Christmas Mass Schedule

11:15 P.M. Hymns and Carols
 12:00 Midnight Solemn Mass
 8:30 A.M. Low Mass
 10:30 A.M. Solemn Mass
 1:00 P.M. Low Mass with organ

*The Priests of St. Stephen, the First Martyr
 Parish
 Wish you a
 Blessed & Happy Christmas*

*Thanks to all for the cards and gifts
 and
 Especially for your prayers.
 May God bless you abundantly!*

Christmas Eve

“Let us therefore make him a little chamber, and put a little bed in it for him and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, that when he cometh to us, he may abide there” (IV Kings 4:13). Such was the Sunamite woman’s regard for the prophet Eliseus, that she would make such preparations for his entertainment! Will we do as much for Christ who is ready to come to us? Take pains, O Christian, to occupy this night in pious thoughts, and aspirations, for the love of God and for the good of your own soul, making yourself worthy to receive the graces which He is ready when He comes, to give you. Think how Mary, who was near her time, and Joseph her spouse obedient to the Imperial command, and perfectly submissive to the will of God, journeyed with the greatest inconvenience to Bethlehem, and when, because of the multitude of people, they found no place to receive them they took refuge, as God willed it, in a most miserable stable, at the extreme end of the town. What love does not the Savior deserve, who for love of us so humbled Himself!

“Glory Be to God on High”

By this song of praise which the priests usually say in the Mass is meant that the greatest praise and the most heartfelt thanks are due to God for having sent His Son into the world; and that those who have the good will to glorify God by all their actions, will receive peace, that is, all happiness, blessings, and salvation.

Rejoice with the angels over the birth of the Savior, return thanks to God, and honor Him alone in all things, that you may have that peace: peace with God, peace with yourself and peace with all men. Learn also from the angels, who rejoiced in the graces which man would receive from the birth of Christ, to rejoice, and thank God for the favors which He gives your neighbor, and by rejoicing participate in them.

(taken from “*The Church’s Year*” by Fr. Leonard Goffine)

Save the Date!
St. Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz
Performed by Leonardo Defilippis
St. Stephen, the First Martyr
January 27, 2013—4:30 pm
Free—Will Offering appreciated to defer expenses



Saint Andrew Christmas Novena

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.
 (Novena begins on the Feast of St. Andrew, November 30 and is to be said 15 times each day.)

~Christmas Gift Ideas~

Our book and gift store at St. Stephens is filled with beautiful and meaningful gifts which would be perfect for Christmas! Everything from statues to our St. Stephen Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Mystic Monk Coffee, sterling & gold filled medals, just to name a few things. The shop is open several hours every day, so be sure to stop in and check things out. For more information call 916-223-3112

Gift Certificates are available too!

Saint Francis Xavier Mission Trip 2013

After the great success of last summer’s trip to the Dominican Republic, we would like to announce our trip to Piura, Peru August 2-14, 2013. The trip is under the direction of seminarians from Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary and the chaplaincy of Fr. Rhone Lillard, F.S.S.P. Young men and women ages 16-21 can apply by visiting www.sfxmission.com. The registration deadline is January 21st. Space on trip is limited and will be granted on a first come first serve basis. Please also visit the website to learn more about the project and find out you can become an auxiliary member of our trip through your donations.
 Contact: SFXMission@gmail.com or (402) 882-0029.

Registration for 1st Communion Class

Registration is now open for 1st Communion classes which will begin January 12, 2013. Forms are available in the parish office or bookstore. Please sign up as soon as possible. The usual age for 1st Communion is 7 years old.

Walk for Life—January 26, 2013

Bus tickets are available. Remember: A FULL BUS IS A PAID FOR BUS. Contact Mike—916-335-4553 or Kathleen—916-204-9125..

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.

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Patricia Becker, Munsill Family, Michael Gould; Sister Marie Jeanne, Elizabeth Pierini; Charles Cantoni, Hayden Garcia, Mitzi Vandenburg, John Reyes; Lori Bates; Fred & Terry Bose; Ed Wedinsky; Ken Taylor, Carmen Brown, Peter Van Steyn, Elizabeth Van Steyn