

Sunday, April 7, 2013

Low Sunday
Mercy Sunday



Sun. 7 April, Low Sunday, I Class

8:30 am Ricardo Yumena
10:30 am Pro Populo
1:00 pm Ignacio Yumena

3:00 Divine Mercy Chaplet, Vespers, & Benediction

Mon. 8 April, Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I Class

7:00 am †Ryan U. Lucina
12:15 pm Chet & Elizabeth Genieuz
7:00 pm †Richard Becker

Tues. 9 April, Feria of Paschaltide, IV Class

7:00 am Victoria Mercado
6:30 pm Presentation Yumena

Wed. 10 April, Feria of Paschaltide, IV Class

7:00 am †Pedro Costales
12:15 pm †Ranelle Y. Lucina

Thurs. 11 April, St. Leo the Great, Pope, Confessor & Doctor, III Class

7:00 am †Benita Luevano
6:30 pm Jose Yumena

Fri. 12 April, Feria of Paschaltide, IV Class

7:00 am †Bill Zeezer
12:15 pm †Rhuel Y. Lucina
6:30 pm †Auresta Collado

Sat. 13 April, St. Hermenegild, Martyr, III Class

7:00 am †Richard Becker
9:00 am †Guadencio Uclaray

Sun. 14 April, 2nd Sunday after Easter, I Class (*Good Shepard Sunday*)

8:30 am †Pablo Uclaray
10:30 am Pro Populo
1:00 pm †Richard Becker

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

†Ray Keller, †Elin Frances Terra, †Martha Robison,
†Gabriel Vargas, †Olympia Gonzalez, †Forrest Long,
†Jenna Telles, †Bernard Beronio

Important Upcoming Dates

April 8—Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (See Masses)
April 14—Confirmation
May 4—May Procession
May 9—Ascension of Our Lord
May 11—First Holy Communion
June 1—Ordinations in Nebraska
June 16-22—Camp Sacred Heart
July 8—12 Annual Parish Retreat (Preached by Fr. Goodwin)
Aug. 4—Finding of the Relics of St. Stephen—Pig Roast & Square Dance

Meditation

The teachings of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Jesus suggest a method of meditation which is especially well adapted for bringing souls to divine intimacy and preparing them for contemplation.

St. John to the Cross gives us the distinctive note of this method: "The end of meditation and mental consideration of divine things is to obtain some knowledge and love of God." We see at once that the emphasis is not placed on the work of the intellect, nor on the "speculative knowledge" of God and of the truths of faith. Rather, it rests on "loving knowledge," which, of course, has its support in thought, but thought that is affectionate, permeated with love, and that surges from a loving heart. When we love a person, we come to know him intuitively, and thus, better and more easily than those who might study him more minutely, but without love.

St. Teresa of Jesus speaks in the same sense and says that prayer consists "not in thinking much, but in loving much." Thought is always subordinated to love. While we do think during the meditation, our purpose is not to become more learned, but to increase our ability to love God more. Consequently, the work of the mind will be orientated especially to the realization of God's love for us; and this, by reflection on the various manifestations of infinite love. It can well be said that there is no divine mystery or truth of faith which does not, in some way, speak of the excessive love of the Lord. The more we are convinced of this love, the more profound will be our "loving knowledge" of God; and at the same time, we shall feel an ever increasing impulse to return love to Him who has first loved us so greatly. Thus, meditation, the discourse of the intellect, will bring us spontaneously to the exercise of love. For this reason we do not give the principal place in our prayer to reflection and reasoning, however lofty and sublime they may be; but we make use of them only insofar as is necessary to awaken love within us, to place us and maintain us in the actual exercise of love.

If in meditation we should not give first place to thought, neither should we go to the opposite extreme and neglect the necessary effort and application. We should apply the following method:

Even before reading the point of the meditation, we should take great care to put ourselves in the presence of God, seeking by means of an energetic act of the will to put aside all alien thoughts, all preoccupation and haste.

Mental prayer is an intimate conversation with God but it is clear that we cannot treat intimately with Him if He is far from our minds and hearts. It is true that God is always present to us, but it is we who are not always present to Him. Therefore, we must establish contact with Our Lord, and place ourselves near Him, by a conscious realization of His presence. Each one of us can do this in the way which seems most suitable—either by considering the Most Holy Trinity dwelling in our heart, or by drawing near to Jesus present in the tabernacle, or perhaps by picturing to ourselves interiorly some episode in the life or the Passion of our Savior. Thus, in the presence of God and beneath His gaze, we read the point of the meditation tranquilly, and reflects upon it calmly and gently, not as if reasoning with ourselves, but rather as if speaking to God in whose presence we are. The more a soul becomes accustomed to this way of reflecting, that is, treating and developing the subject of our meditation with God, the more quickly will this method attain its end, which is to enable the soul to converse with the Lord, to speak affectionately with Him as a son speaks with its father, as a friend with a friend.

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

Spiritual Joy

We hear so much about the cross in Christianity that we are liable to overlook the correlative side of our faith, namely, its promise not only of peace but of positive happiness and joy.

If this aspect of our religion needed to be recognized in every age of the Church's history, it is more than ever necessary today. We are living in such personalist and subjective times, when so much value is placed on experience, that we need to stress today more than ever the assurance of personal satisfaction in living up to the demands of Christian virtue. After all, no one does anything, even a trifle, without some motive; and what better motivation for the following of Christ than the assurance of a share, already in this life, in the happiness of Christ?

It is not difficult to convince ourselves on faith, that living up to the expectations of the Gospel carries with it the promise of joy in the service of Christ.

It all began at Bethlehem, when the angel first appeared to the shepherds watching their flock. When they saw him they were terrified. So he told them, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

It was all explained in great detail by the Savior in the Sermon on the Mount, when He taught the disciples of all future ages what we commonly call the Beatitudes but what could more literally be called the eight-fold path to happiness. In plain language, Christ assured happiness here and now, and not only in heaven later on, to all who believe in Him strongly enough to take Him at His word. The Beatitudes bring happiness infallibly, provided they are taken seriously, and put into practice literally.

Then at the Last Supper, Christ went out of His way to tell us of the joy that awaits us if only we listen to His teaching:

"If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete."

(*"Holiness in the Church"* by Fr. John Hardon, S.J.)

"Holy Mass - Gate to Heaven" 2013 Annual Retreat—July 8—12

Fr. Calvin Goodwin, FSSP will be preaching our retreat this year. It will be held at Christ the King Retreat Center. This is a silent retreat, each retreatant will have a private room/bath. If you would like to hold a space call the parish office or stop in the bookstore. Space is limited. For more information call 916-455-5114.

"In the fever and agitation of modern life, the need of meditation and spiritual repose impresses itself on Christian souls who desire to reflect on their eternal destiny, and direct their life in this world towards God."

Camp Sacred Heart 2013

Camp Sacred Heart will be held June 16—22 this year. Registration is open to boys age 9—18, boys unknown to the chaplain must get a letter of recommendation from a priest.

For more information call the parish office or 916-223-3112. Forms may be obtained by e-mail @ stephenproto@yahoo.com You may also stop by the parish office or bookstore.

Sponsors needed for Camp

If you are able to help sponsor a boy for camp, there is a great need, especially for large families. Your help is very much appreciated!

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.

Chesterton Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 16th after the 6:30 pm Mass.

The readings for April are as follows:

From Tremendous Trifles - "A Cab Ride Across the Country",
"The Two Noises" and "Some Policemen and a Moral"
From Father Brown - "The Hammer of God"

All are welcome! Please join us.

Harry Potter

and

THE PAGANIZATION OF CULTURE

Master story-teller and artist Michael O'Brien—the man to whom CNN went for comment on Harry Potter—has penned the definitive work assessing the Potter phenomenon. This book is essential reading for all parents whose children have read or are considering reading the wildly popular offerings by J.K. Rowling and similar works such as Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series.

Although this is an analytical work, the reader will be captivated from the beginning, from the must-read preface onward.

O'Brien's earlier work, "A Landscape with Dragons," delineated authentic Christian fantasy literature from its counterfeits. Now in "Harry Potter and the Paganization of Culture," he fascinatingly contrasts Potter-world with C.S. Lewis's "Narnia" and with Tolkein's "The Lord of the Rings," and specifically "Harry with Frodo."

For those whose children have consumed Potter, O'Brien's analysis will enable parents to comprehend the messages which have been fed their children and give them the points and arguments which will hopefully be the antidote to properly reset their moral order.

The book goes beyond Potter, however, to address other bestselling series such as "Twilight" by Stephenie Meyer and Phillip Pullman's "The Golden Compass."

In addition to these and other fantasy books, O'Brien reviews the films which they spawned.

In all, the author's new book teaches Christians how to discern harmless fantasy literature and film from that which is destructive to heart, mind and soul.

"I have long had serious reservations about the spiritual underpinning to the Harry Potter series. Like Michael O'Brien, I believe Catholic parents need to be alerted to the possible negative influences that these books can have on the moral and spiritual formation of their children. Any parent concerned about the formation of the character of their children should read this book."

~ Bishop Julian Porteouis,
Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia

Confraternity of St. Peter FSSP Anniversary Pilgrimage 25 Years

Travel to Rome, Italy to attend a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving at the Fraternity of St. Peter's Rome Parish on the 25th anniversary of the order's founding.

For more information call 916-223-3112 or visit the website @ www.syversentouring.com/confraternity

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; Ken Taylor, Peter Van Steyn, Elizabeth Van Steyn, Dr. Gerald Foy, Patricia Greco; Eleanor Knecht