

Sunday, December 15, 2013
3rd Sunday in Advent
Gaudete Sunday



I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.

Sun. 15 Dec. Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday), I Class

8:30 am †Elise Bartholomew
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm James Vickerman & family

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 16 Dec. St. Eusebius, Bishop & Martyr, III Class

7:00 am Dr. George Stote
 12:15 pm Raymond Alatorre

Tues. 17 Dec. Greater Feria of Advent, II Class

7:00 am for Priests, living and dead
 6:30 pm †Louis Solton

Wed. 18 Dec. Ember Wednesday, II Class

7:00 am Catherine Vejraska
 12:15 pm James Vickerman & family

Thurs. 19 Dec. Greater Feria of Advent, II Class

7:00 am Perez family, living & deceased
 6:30 pm FSSP

Fri. 20 Dec. Ember Friday, II Class

7:00 am Chris Harbaugh
 12:15 pm Fr. Eduardo Mendoza
 6:30 pm Health & welfare of Lupe Lopez & family

Sat. 21 Dec. St. Thomas, Apostle, II Class

7:00 am Katherine Nino
 9:00 am Marvin & Faye Mayo family

Sun. 22 Dec. Fourth Sunday of Advent, I Class

8:30 am John Patch
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm James Vickerman & 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, 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, †Georgia Munsill, †Patricia Greco, †Draga Kozina, †Doug McNeely, †Louis Solton, †Rhoda Bowen, †Mary Margaret Mantsch, †Teresa Reali

Important Upcoming Dates

Dec.17—Chesterton Society Meeting
 Dec. 19—CSP Advent Evening of Recollection
 Jan. 4—Epiphany Around the World—Parish party
 Jan. 5—Blessing of Epiphany Water
 Jan. 6—Epiphany
 Jan. 25—Walk for Life
 Feb. 2—Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 March 26—Confirmation
 May 3—May Procession & Solemn Mass at the Cathedral
 May 10—First Holy Communion
 June—21-28—Camp Sacred Heart

Interior Silence

Holy Scripture says, “In the multitude of words there shall not want sin. He that hath no guard on his speech shall meet with evils.” The rule of life of a consecrated soul, even if she lives in the world, should always provide for the practice of silence; and if, because of the demands of her duties, it is absolutely impossible for her to observe fixed times of silence, it is indispensable that she hold fast to this principle: to speak as little as possible with creatures in order to be able to speak as much as possible with God. She must, therefore, accustom herself to keeping control over her words, thus avoiding loquaciousness, idle chatter, prolonged conversations, and excessive exchange of confidences. The same norm which governs the use of the senses governs also the use of speech—it is to be used only in the measure required by duty or charity. Of course, it is certainly licit to talk for the purpose of taking some just alleviation or recreation, but always with moderation and within reasonable limits.

However, it is not enough to observe exterior silence; we must also strive for interior silence, that is, silence of the interior senses—the memory, imagination, sensitive feelings, thoughts, recollections of the past and useless conjectures about the future.

“If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue...this man’s religion is vain,” which is to be understood, says St. John of the Cross, “no less of inward speech than of outward.”

God Himself says to the soul desirous of divine intimacy, “Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father’s house.” Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity makes the following comment on this verse, “In order to listen we must forget our ‘father’s house’; that means, whatever pertains to the natural life... . To forget our ‘people’ seems to me more difficult; for by ‘people’ is meant that world which forms, as it were, part of ourselves. It includes our feelings, memories, impressions, and so forth. In a word, it is *self*. We must forget it, give it up, and when the soul has broken with it, and is wholly delivered from all it means, ‘the King greatly desires is beauty.’ ”

The beauty of a recollected soul is the unity of her spirit, which is not divided and dissipated among creatures but is entirely concentrated on God. Then God takes pleasure in her and often manifests Himself to her, transforming her recollection, that is, her “silence” and making it divine, for “the knowledge of Him is in divine silence.”

This total silence, both exterior and interior, disposes the soul to know and listen to God who dwells within her: “One word spoke the Father, which Word was His Son, and this Word He speaks ever in eternal silence, and in silence must it be heard by the soul”; and Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity exclaims: “O eternal Word, utterance of my God, I desire to spend my life in listening to You!” This is the fundamental occupation of a soul who wishes to be a “perfect praise of glory” of the Blessed Trinity: to live interiorly in continual silence, listening to and adoring God present within her, and exteriorly, being and doing only what the divine Word indicates from moment to moment.

Help Decorate the Church!

We will be decorating the church on Monday the 23 of December. Many hands will be needed. We will begin about 9:00 am. Please join us!

Registration for First Holy Communion
For children who will be at least 7 years old by January

Please pick up a registration packet in the office or bookstore for First Communion classes. Completed forms and copy of your child’s Baptism certificate can be returned to the office or bookstore. Classes will begin January 11, 2013.

Christmas Anticipation Prayer

Beginning on St. Andrew the Apostle’s feast day, November 30, the following beautiful prayer is traditionally recited fifteen times a day until Christmas. This is a very meditative prayer that helps us increase our awareness of the real focus of Christmas and helps us prepare ourselves spiritually for His coming.

Prayer:
 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 the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, [here mention your request] through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother. Amen.

Mass Intentions

Our Mass intentions for next year are almost half filled, therefore we are asking that families request no more than 10

From a Sermon by Saint Francis de Sales

St. John the Baptist told us, “I am the voice of Him who cries out in the desert: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord!’ ” Please note this glorious saint’s perfect humility. The more people pursued him, the more he withdrew and lowered himself in his nothingness, always rising thereby to a higher degree of humility. O noble virtue of humility! Not without reason is it called the foundation of all virtues. Without it, there is none. It may not be the preeminent virtue—charity or love of God surpasses it in dignity and excellence—yet these two virtues have such mutual affinity that one is never found without the other.

Since it is to the point, I will relate to you a beautiful sketch on this subject which I read with pleasure in the recently published Lives of the Fathers. The author has gathered these lives diligently and carefully. He relates that many of these good religious had at one point assembled and were talking together familiarly in a spiritual conference. One of them was highly praising obedience; another, charity; a third, patience. Hearing what all his brothers said about these virtues, one of them added: “As for myself, it seems that humility is the first and most necessary of all.” He made the following comparison which is my sermon here: “Humility and charity are united like John the Baptist and Our Lord. Humility is the forerunner and the precursor of charity, as St. John the Baptist was of the Saviour. It prepares the way; it is the voice crying out: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’ And just as John the Baptist went before the Messiah, so also must humility come in order to empty hearts that they might then receive charity, for that can never dwell in a soul in which humility has not first prepared the lodging for it.”

In declaring that he was only a voice, how could St. John humble himself more? For the voice is only a breath, an exhalation into the air which produces some little sound and then disappears entirely. In this way the glorious St. John humbled himself to the very depths of his nothingness.

2014 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.



Advent
Evening of Recollection Confraternity of St. Peter

Don’t miss out on the spiritual benefits of our CSP Evening of Recollection on Thursday, December 19th, beginning with Holy Mass at 6:30 pm. Each month we are given a wonderful sermon and conference along with Holy Mass and CSP prayers.

The Confraternity of St. Peter is a group of lay men and women united to the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter.

- Conforming our lives in the Spirituality of the Holy Mass
 - Praying for the priests and seminarians of the Fraternity of St. Peter.
 - Praying for more vocations to the Holy Priesthood
- For more information visit www.confraternityofstpeter.com or call the parish office 916-455-5114.

Epiphany Around the World

Mark your calendars!
 You are invited to an international potluck to celebrate the Great Feast of Epiphany at St. Stephen’s.
 The festivities will begin at 5 o’clock,
 Saturday, January 4th, 2014

Share your family’s traditional culinary specialties with your fellow parishioners. If you prefer to bring other needed items such as utensil, cups etc. please contact Pat Feldman at

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.

Save the Date!

Save the date—**Saturday, January 25, 2014**. Tenth Annual Walk for Life. Contact **Mike (916) 335-4553** or **Kathleen (916) 204-9125** to make bus reservations.

Reminder— Chesterton Society meeting:

Dec. 17th at 7:30pm.

We will be discussing “The Ethics of Elfland” from “Orthodoxy.” We will also be reading “The Mistake of the Machine” from “The Wisdom of Father Brown.”
 All are welcome!

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, Sister Marie Jeanne, Charles Cantoni, Mitzi Vandenburg, John Reyes, Dr. Gerald Foy, Cindy Yumoto, Carlos Aldana, Liliana, Luz & Cesar Morales, Mark Garcia Family, Richard Corbin, Philip Rutschow