

**Sunday, December 7, 2014  
Second Sunday of Advent**



**Sun. 7 Dec. Second Sunday of Advent, I Class**

8:30 am †Jacque Vezard  
10:30 am Pro Populo  
1:00 pm Charles Watts family

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

**Mon. 8 Dec. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I Class**

7:00 am Jose & Racquel Magabo  
12:15 pm †Jacqueline & †Andre Cruze  
7:00 pm

**Tues. 9 Dec. Feria of Advent, III Class**

7:00 am †Teofilo Yumena  
6:30 pm Maria Lopez

**Wed. 10 Dec. Feria of Advent, III Class**

7:00 am Rhuell Y. Lucina  
12:15 pm †Vernon Marti

**Thurs. 11 Dec. St. Damasus I, Pope & Confessor, III Class**

7:00 am Holy Souls  
6:30 am FSSP

**Fri. 12 Dec. Our Lady of Guadalupe, III Class**

7:00 am †Jonan Sneeringer  
12:15 pm Alicia Lopez  
6:30 pm Nicholas & Michelle DiGiovanni

**Sat. 13 Dec. St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr, III Class**

7:00 am †Grandparents of Marina  
9:00 am †Mother of Anne Marie Simonlin

**Sun. 14 Dec. Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday), I Class**

8:30 am Joe & Katy Marty & family  
10:30 am Pro Populo  
1:00 pm Nestor & Celia

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**

December 8—**Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin**

**Mary—Holy Day of Obligation**

December 12—Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

December 13—Rorate Mass at 5:30 AM

December 16—Chesterton Society Meeting

January 3—Parish Christmas Party

January 10—1st Communion Classes begin

January 24—11th Annual Walk For Life

April 13—Confirmation at 6:30 pm

May 3—May Procession & Solemn Mass

May 10—First Holy Communion

May 30—FSSP Priestly Ordinations

June 21-27—Camp Sacred Heart

**Seeking God in Prayer**

“When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.” Exterior solitude, withdrawing physically from the noise, from the occupations and preoccupations of this world is a great means, and even, at least to a certain point, an indispensable means for leading a serious interior life.

Every Rule of religious life, even of a simple secular institute, prescribes certain hours for prayer, during which every occupation must be firmly laid aside, and one must retire into solitude in order to renew one's spirit by means of a more direct and more intense contact with God. Without these prayerful intervals, it is a real illusion to pretend to live a spiritual life—not only a serious one, but even the most elementary one.

Every activity, no matter how important or urgent it is, must therefore be suspended at the prescribed time, so that all the strength of the soul may be concentrated in the supreme activity of prayer. These hours are sacred. A soul consecrated to God cannot, of its own initiative, subtract even a small part of this time under pain of seeing its spiritual life weaken. The time of prayer is the time to apply Jesus' great commandment: “Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God,” this kingdom that we now know is within us. In order to find it, we must have these moments of retirement, solitude, total avoidance of creatures, of business and occupations. During these blessed minutes we can and should effectively “go forth” from all things and “withdraw ourselves” from all creatures to seek God hidden within us.

When the Samaritan woman asked Jesus where the Lord should be adored, He answered, “God is a spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth.” The Divine Master tells us that more important than the *place* in which we pray, is the interior spirit with which we pray, for from it alone can flow the “true adoration” of God, who is “spirit” and truth. Although retirement and material solitude are of great importance in prayer, they will not suffice if they are not accompanied by interior recollection.

St. John of the Cross says, “...shutting the door upon thee (that is to say, *shutting thy will upon all things*), pray to thy Father in secret.” This does not mean to shut only the material door of our room, but that it is necessary to close our will to everything, that is, to “...shut all thy faculties upon all creatures.”

If we wish to find God in prayer, we must begin by making this very firm decision of our will: to put aside everything—all care, all preoccupation with human things—and concentrate all the powers of our souls on God alone.

St. Teresa of Jesus offers the following advice, “Since we have resolved to devote to Him this very brief period of time...let us give it to Him freely with our minds unoccupied by other things and with a firm resolve never to take it back again, Whatever we may suffer through trials, annoyances, or aridities.”

We often give the prescribed time to prayer, but we do not give our hearts to it; they are still preoccupied with earthly cares. We go to the chapel of our room, but do not know how to withdraw ourselves from the thoughts and cares of life; therefore we cannot reach that intimate interior hiding-place where God conceals himself.

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

**My Soul Magnifies the Lord**

The initial transports of a soul taken out of itself and no longer knowing itself are followed by an ineffable calm, a peace surpassing all the senses, and a celestial hymn.

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” What is to be said about this divine canticle? Its simplicity and loftiness rise above our intellect and invite us to silence rather than to speech. God himself must teach us what to think of it. Here we meet a soul who has left herself behind completely and glories only in God, finding all her joy in him; she is at peace, for nothing can take away the one of whom she sings.

“My soul magnifies, my soul exalts the Lord.” After she has exhausted herself celebrating his greatness, no matter how lofty her contemplation, she exalts him still more, rising higher and higher, above all things, until she is lost from view. “My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” At the very name of *Savior*, my senses rejoice, and I find in him the salvation I cannot find in myself.

“For he has looked upon the lowliness of his servant.” If I were to think that it depended upon me to attract his regard, my lowliness and nothingness would deprive me of all hope and rest. Yet because he has looked upon me voluntarily and from pure goodness, I have an imperishable support in the mercy with which he has regarded me, for he is kind and generous.

She declares her blessings, whose source she knows to be God and which can come only from God. “And behold,” she says, “all generations shall call me blessed.” Having thus been raised to the highest contemplation, she begins to join her happiness to that of all redeemed peoples in the second part of her song.

“For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation.” She sees that her happiness is the happiness of all the earth, and that she is carrying the one in whom all nations shall be blessed. She considers the holiness and the power of God, who is the cause of these wonders.

The one who alone is powerful has accomplished in me a work worthy of his power alone: the God-man, stripped of all possessions yet Savior of the world, conqueror of the virtuous and victor over the proud. “And holy is his name.” God is holiness itself. He is holy, and he makes things to be holy. When does he appear more holy but when his Son is also Mary's, and when he pours out mercy, grace, and holiness from generation to generation upon those who fear him?

If we wish to partake of this grace, let us be holy, and we will proclaim with all the nations that Mary is blessed. (*Meditations For Advent* by Jacques-Benigne Bossuet)

**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.

**Reminder— Chesterton Society Meeting:**

**December 16th at 7:30pm**

We will be reading :

Orthodoxy: "What's Wrong With the World" - Part III  
“Feminism, or the Mistake About Woman”

Fr. Brown: "The Curse of the Golden Cross"

All are welcome!

**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.

**Christmas Party**

The preparation for our annual parish Christmas Party is underway!

Help is needed for set-up and clean-up! If you are able to volunteer please contact Patricia Obi 916-672-7774 or via e-mail: patriciaobi18@gmail.com

**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.

**FSSP Calendars and Ordos**

Fraternity of St. Peter calendars and ordos are available to purchase in the bookstore. Please get them early as we often run out.

There are also many wonderful books and religious gifts available in the bookstore for Christmas giving. Our store is open everyday. For more information and hours please call 916-223-3112.

**Parish Swap**

Do you have some items that you no longer need? Now you can list them on a page linked to our website. Just contact Rose-Mary at ParishSwap@gmail.com - give her a description of what you have, and your contact information. It is also possible to send a picture to be posted.

To view what is available, just click on the “links” button on the front page of www.sacfssp.com  
For more information call the parish office.

**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

**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.

**Please Keep in Your Prayers ...**

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, John Reyes, Carlos Aldana, Liliana, Luz & Ceasar Morales, Richard Corbin, Renee Burns, Sue McGrath, Ron Carlon, 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