

Sunday, January 25, 2015
3rd Sunday after Epiphany



Sun. 25 Jan. 3rd Sunday after Epiphany, II Class

8:30 am Tish Gallagher
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Pati Obi

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 26 Jan. St. Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr, III Class

7:00 am Elaine Dana
 12:15 pm †Bill Brenner

Tues. 27 Jan. St. John Chrysostom, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor, III Class

7:00 am †Remedias Mortensen
 6:30 pm Carol Cummings

Wed. 28 Jan. St. Peter Nolasco, Confessor, III Class

7:00 am Poor Souls
 12:15 pm †Alice Marie Becker

Thurs. 29 Jan. St. Francis de Sales, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor, III Class

7:00 am Suffering Souls in Purgatory
 6:30 pm Charlie Dana

Fri. 30 Jan. St. Martina, Virgin & Martyr, III Class

7:00 am Joseph Aranas
 12:15 pm †Shirley Feiss Licatovich
 6:30 pm †Eleanor Matthews

Sat. 31 Jan. St. John Bosco, Confessor, III Class

7:00 am †Julius Holmquist
 9:00 am Thor Pilegaard

Sun. 1 Feb. Septuagesima Sunday, II Class

8:30 am Ben Dana
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Carrie Parker

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 30—High School Youth Group
 February 2—Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 6:30 pm High Mass
 February 11—Our Lady of Lourdes
 February 18—Ash Wednesday
 April 5—Easter Sunday
 April 13—Confirmation at 6:30 pm
 May 2—May Procession & Solemn Mass
 May 9—First Holy Communion
 May 30—FSSP Priestly Ordinations
 June 21-27—Camp Sacred Heart

The Spirit of Communion

The love of Jesus Christ reaches its highest perfection and produces the richest harvest of graces in the ineffable union He contracts with the soul in Holy Communion. Therefore, by every desire for goodness, holiness, and perfection that piety, the virtues, and love can inspire in us, we are bound to direct our course toward this union, toward frequent and even daily Communion.

But perhaps you will say that your nothingness is overwhelming by the Majesty of God.—Ah, but no! That Majesty, the celestial and divine Majesty which reigns in heaven, is not present in Holy Communion. Do you not see that Jesus has veiled Himself in order not to frighten you, in order to embolden you to look upon Him and come near to Him?

Or perhaps the sense of your unworthiness keeps you away from this God of all sanctity?—It is true that the greatest saint, or even the purest of the Cherubim, is unworthy to receive the divine Host. But do you not see that Jesus is hiding His virtues, is hiding His very sanctity, to show you His goodness simply and solely? Do you not hear that sweet voice inviting you: “Come unto Me”? Do you not feel the nearness of that divine Love like a magnet drawing you? After all, it is not your merits which give you your rights, nor is it your virtues which open to you the doors of the Cenacle; it is the love of Jesus.

“But I have so little piety, so little love; how can my soul receive our Lord when it is so lukewarm and therefore so repulsive and so undeserving of His notice?”

Lukewarm? That is but one more reason why you should plunge again and again into this burning furnace. Repulsive? Oh, never, to this good Shepherd, this tender Father, fatherly above all fathers, motherly above all mothers! The more weak and ill you are, the more you need His help; is not bread the sustenance of both strong and weak?

“But if I have sins on my conscience”? If, after examination, you are not morally certain, if you are not positively conscious of any mortal sin, you may go to Holy Communion. If you forgive all who have offended you, already your own offenses are forgiven you; and as for your daily negligences, your distractions during prayer, your first movements of impatience, of vanity, of self-love, as likewise for your failure, in your sloth, to put away from you immediately the fire of temptation, bind together all these shoots of Adam's sin and cast them into the furnace of divine love. What love forgives is forgiven indeed.

Ah, do not let yourself be turned away from the Holy Table by vain pretexts! If you will not communicate for your own sake, then communicate instead for Jesus Christ. To communicate for Jesus Christ is to console Him for the neglect to which the majority of men have abandoned him; it is to confirm His wisdom in instituting this Sacrament of spiritual sustenance; it is to open the riches of the treasures of grace which Jesus Christ has stored up in the Eucharist only that He may bestow them upon mankind; nay more, it is to give to His sacramental love the overflowing life it desires, to His goodness the happiness of doing good, to His Majesty the glory of bestowing His gifts. By receiving Communion, therefore, you fulfill the glorious purpose of the Holy Eucharist.

(*Holy Communion* by Saint Peter Julian Eymard)

God Looks Upon Us Lovingly, Notwithstanding Our Weakness

You ask me whether Our Lord thinks of you, and whether He looks upon you with love. Yes, He thinks of you, and not only of you, but of the least hair of your head. This is an article of faith. We cannot doubt it. I know well indeed that you do not doubt it, but only express, as you have done the dryness, aridity, and insensibility in which you at present find your soul. “Truly God is in this place, and I knew it not,” said Jacob; that is to say, I had no sentiment of it, it did not appear so to me.

And that God looks upon you with love you have no reason to doubt, for He looks upon the most dreadful sinners in the world lovingly when they have the least true desire to be converted to Him. Tell me, do you not intend to belong to God? Do you not desire to serve Him faithfully? And who gave you this desire, this intention, unless Himself in His loving regard for you?

To examine whether your heart pleases Him is not necessary, but rather whether His Heart pleases you. And if you look upon His Heart, it is impossible but that it will please you, for it is a Heart most sweet, most kind, most condescending, most gracious towards miserable creatures, provided that they acknowledge their misery. And who will not love this royal Heart, so full of tenderness for us?

You remark very well that these temptations happen to you because your heart is without tenderness towards God; for it is quite true that if you had tenderness, you would have consolation, and if you had consolation, you would no longer be in pain. But the love of God does not consist in consolation nor in tenderness, for if it did, then Our Lord would not have loved His Father when He was sad even to death and cried out: “My Father, My Father, why hast Thou abandoned me?” And still it was at that moment He made the greatest act of love which it is possible to conceive.

We would always like to have a little consolation, a little sugar in our tea, that is to say, the feeling of love and tenderness, and consequently consolation; and in like manner we would much wish to be without imperfections; but we must have patience to belong to human nature, and not to angelic nature. Our imperfections ought not to please us; on the contrary, we should say with the holy Apostle: “Oh, miserable me! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” But they ought not to astonish us, or to take away our courage; we ought even to derive submission, humility, and distrust of ourselves from them, but not discouragement, nor affliction of heart, much less doubtfulness of God's love towards us. Thus, as the weakness and infirmity of a child did please its mother, yet she does not cease to love it, but cherishes it with tenderness and compassion, so God, while He approves not of our imperfections and venial sins, does not cease to love us tenderly; hence David had reason to say to God: “Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am weak.”

But enough! Live joyful; Our Lord looks upon you with love, and with so much the more tenderness as you are the more feeble. Never permit your mind willingly to entertain thoughts to the contrary; and when they come, regard them not, turn your eyes away from their iniquity, and have recourse to God with a courageous humility, to speak to Him of His ineffable goodness by which He loves us, poor, abject, and miserable as we are.

Alas! What obligations we are under to Our Lord, and how much confidence we should have that what His mercy has begun in us it will accomplish, and that He will give such increase to this little vessel of oil, the good will we have, that all our vessels will be filled with it, and many others belonging to our neighbors too! But we must close the door of our chamber fast, that is, retire along with our heart more and more into the Divine Goodness.

(*Consoling Thoughts of Saint Francis de Sales* compiled by Père Huguet)

...In Memoriam

Please pray for all our Beloved Dead listed in our Memorial Book in the sanctuary.

Names are placed there at the beginning of each new year.

Saint Francis Xavier Mission Trips

1. Guadalajara, Mexico: 3/28-4/11 *Application deadline - 1/23
 2. Piura, Peru: July 28—Aug. 10 *Application deadline - 2/9
 3. Piura, Peru: Aug. 14—24 *Application deadline - 2/9
- www.sfxmission.com SFXMission@gmail.com

High School Youth Group

Beginning Friday, January 30, a High School Youth Group will meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month. Meeting begins with the 6:30 pm Mass followed by a light dinner, theological talk and group discussion, and games. Service projects and other social events will be included. Parents will be needed as volunteers. Contact Fr. Akers for more information.

Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

If you are interested in buying candles to be blessed on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary stop by the bookstore and let us know. We will have 100% beeswax candles for purchase, you may also bring your own candles to be blessed. Make sure you bring them early (6:20 pm or earlier).

The blessing of candles will take place at the beginning of the 6:30 pm Mass on Feb. 2nd, we will then process into the church for Holy Mass. You will be able to pick your candles up following the Mass.

Tax Letters Available

Letters acknowledging charitable donations to St. Stephen's Church are available for pick up in the vestibule of the church. Please pick them up as soon as possible.

St. John Bosco

“Poor Don Bosco.” It was a pity that such a good young priest was losing his mind. Why he was dreaming about future churches, vast playgrounds, lots of helpers and thousands of boys! Before things got out of hand, why not have him checked out at the lunatic asylum.

Therefore, one morning two priests arrived at the Oratory to invite Fr. John Bosco for a drive. He agreed to go, but insisted that they get into the carriage first. Then he slammed the door. “To the asylum, quick!” he called to the coachman—who set off at a gallop. The two priests had plenty of explaining to do at the asylum, and Don Bosco was no longer mentioned.

St. John Bosco's plans were based on the great work which had been foretold to him by Our Lady in his youth. Prophetic dreams and the reading of hearts became ordinary in the life of this extraordinary priest, who was “Father” to so many boys. His method was love, kindness and patience, leading the boys to the practice of frequent Confession and devout Communion.

St. John Bosco's amazing life included attacks by ruffians, harassment by government officials and protection by a huge, mysterious dog. It also included remarkable cures, “miraculous” fundraising episodes, the esteem of Popes and the founding of the Salesians Society. All in all, this is the story of one of the greatest and best-loved saints of the Church.

Saint John Bosco by F. A. Forbes

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*

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, Carlos Aldana, Liliana, Luz & Cesar Morales, Richard Corbin, Renee Burns, Sue McGrath, Ron Carlon, Michael Cuellar, Heather Cuellar, Joan Blackburn, Luis Salazar, Norman Sayles, Lorraine Peterson, Sandy Sneary, Jeannemarie Crabtree