

**Sunday, December 21, 2014
Fourth Sunday of Advent**



Sun. 21 Dec.	Fourth Sunday of Advent, I Class
8:30 am	Bill Munsill
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	†Shirley Abdo
3:00 pm	Vespers & Benediction
Mon. 22 Dec.	Greater Feria of Advent, II Class
7:00 am	Ryan & Lucina
12:15 pm	Dana Children
Tues. 23 Dec.	Greater Feria of Advent, II Class
7:00 am	Brady Lendewig & Quinn Jackson
6:30 pm	Jennifer Scarry
Wed. 24 Dec.	Vigil of Christmas, I Class
7:00 am	†James White
12:15 pm	Michael & Joan Szumowski
12:00 am	Special Intention
Thurs. 25 Dec.	The Nativity of Our Lord, I Class
8:30 am	Special Intention
10:30 am	Special Intention
1:00 pm	Special Intention
Fri. 26 Dec.	St. Stephen, Protomartyr, II Class
7:00 am	Rhea Fe Lucina
12:15 pm	Evan Johnson
7:00 pm	St. Stephen Guild
Sat. 27 Dec.	St. John, Apostle & Evangelist, II Class
7:00 am	Barbara Ryan
9:00 am	Kalma Salvesson
Sun. 28 Dec.	Sunday in the Octave of Christmas, II Class
8:30 am	Tish Gallagher
10:30 am	Pro Populo
1:00 pm	Mike Solton
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 25—Midnight Mass
Dec. 26—St. Stephen Guild Mass & Medal Ceremony
Dec. 27—Feast of St. John—Blessing of wine after each Mass
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 2—May Procession & Solemn Mass
May 10—First Holy Communion
May 30—FSSP Priestly Ordinations
June 21-27—Camp Sacred Heart

The Great Mystery is Accomplished

Of all the works done by God in time and outside of Himself, the redemptive Incarnation of the Word is the greatest. It is the greatest because it has for end not a mere creature, however sublime, but God Himself, the eternal Word who, in time, assumed a human nature. It is the greatest because it is the supreme manifestation of the merciful love of God, and the work which above all others glorifies Him; and it glorifies Him precisely in reference to charity which is His very essence. It is also the greatest of His works because of the immense good it brings to mankind. The salvation, sanctification, and eternal happiness of the whole human race depend wholly upon the Incarnation of the Word, upon Jesus, the Incarnate Word. God the Father "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted... Who hath predestined us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself... In whom we have redemption...the remission of sins according to the riches of His grace... God hath quickened us together in Christ...and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus." Jesus, the Incarnate Word, is the one source of our salvation and our sanctification. Without Him, man would not be able to call God by the sweet name of Father; he could not love Him as a son loves his father, nor could he hope to be admitted to His intimacy: there would be no grace, no Beatific Vision. Without Jesus, man would be imprisoned within the limits of a purely human life, deprived of every supernatural horizon, in time and in eternity.

God's greatest work, the Incarnation of the Word, destined to enlighten and save the whole world, takes place in obscurity and silence, and under the most humble and most human conditions. Caesar's edict obliges Mary and Joseph to leave their little home in Nazareth and undertake a journey. They travel on foot like the poor, in spite of the discomfort of Mary's condition. They do not think of objecting to the trip; they make no complaint, but obey with promptness and simplicity. He who commands is a man, but their profound spirit of faith discovers God's will in the command of the pagan emperor. And they go, trusting in God's Providence; God knows, God will provide: "To them that love God, all things work together unto good." In Bethlehem there is no room for them; they are obliged to take shelter in a hillside cave. The poverty of this refuge for animals does not dismay or scandalize them. They know that the Child who is about to be born is the Son of God; but they also know that God's works are entirely different from man's! And if God wishes His greatest work to be accomplished here, in this wretched stable, in utter poverty, Mary and Joseph embrace His will! The least bit of human reasoning would be enough to confuse and disturb them, and arouse doubts. Mary and Joseph are extremely humble; hence, they are docile and filled with faith in God. And God, as is His custom, made use of what is humble and despicable in the eyes of the world to accomplish the greatest of His works: the Incarnation of the Word.

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

Christmas Mass Schedule

Holy Day of Obligation

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

***Light Refreshments Following Midnight Mass**

There will be a small reception in the gym after the Midnight Mass. Mulled wine will be provided. Please bring a savory or sweet finger food, such as cheese & crackers or cookies, to share.

The Birth of Jesus—Conquering Self-Pity

Joseph prepared to leave Nazareth for Jerusalem to enroll in the census at Bethlehem. Mary didn't have to go, but he urged her to come so that her reputation would not be hurt among those who didn't know about the Virgin Conception. He made such careful preparations so that she would be comfortable on the journey. He worked so hard beforehand to make extra money, so they could settle in Bethlehem until Jesus got to be two or three years old. It wasn't hard to work for Mary and Jesus; it was a labor of love.

When they arrived at Bethlehem, Joseph began to realize how crowded were all the homes and inns. It was an awfully bitter trial for him when door after door was closed. He tried to hide it from Mary; he looked as cheerful and hopeful as he could. Then finally she let him know that she understood. Any place would do. A stable or one of the caves would be fine. He built a fire; she cleaned up hurriedly. And there Jesus was born! Both Mary and Joseph were joyful. They had nothing and they had everything!

Dear Joseph, you must have loved her so very much then. Any other girl would have had to fight back the tears of self-pity, no matter how brave she was or how resigned to God's Will. But you saw not a trace of a tear, for self-pity was never allowed the smallest place in her heart or your own. You took things as they came; you made the best of what you had, and you never questioned for a moment that this was anything except the best.

Dear Joseph and Mary, pray for me that I may have that same beautiful attitude of mind and heart. I notice insults so easily and rash judge and write people off for the slightest infractions—so often just imagined or exaggerated. I tend to think how bad things are and wonder why they couldn't be better, and thus waste my time in self-pity. I go over negative thoughts again and again, instead of taking people and events and things just as I find them and making the best of them. Teach me, O my Mother and St. Joseph, that all joy and warmth comes from within, that life is what I make it. Pray for me to be humble. St. Joseph, who loved the background, pray for me that I may be self-effacing and manly like you. Let me treat all negative thoughts like bad thoughts—out!

(My Meditation on the Gospel by Rev. James E. Sullivan)

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.

...In Memoriam

†Charles Cantoni, †Manuel Nino, †Margaret Correa,
†Cindy Yumoto, †Fr. Vladimir Kozina, †Philip Rutschow,
†Jennie Tomasi

Meditation on the Nativity

Performed by Jacob Kasak

December 28, 2014—after Vespers

A series of pieces depicting the Incarnation through the Holy Family's return to Nazareth upon King Herod's death.
Potluck to follow

~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!

Announcement

Fr. Akers will be on pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the Christmas Season (Dec 27-Jan 16). He will certainly remember all parishioners at these holy sites, but if you would like specific prayer intentions to be brought to the Holy Land, please email : zakers@olgseminary.org

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.

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.

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.

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

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, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, John Reyes, Richard Corbin, Renee Burns, Sue McGrath, Ron Carlon, Michael Cuellar, Heather Cuellar, Msgr. Kavanaugh, Anidel Perez Aravelo, Joan Blackburn, Luis Salazar, Bill Sneeringer, Norman Sayles, Lorraine Peterson, Sandy Sneary