

Sunday, December 30, 2012
Sunday in the Octave of Christmas



Sun. 30 December, Sunday in the Octave of Christmas,

II Class
 8:30 am Chester Patch V
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm †Margaret Fetting

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 31 December, 7th Day in the Octave of Christmas,

II Class
 7:00 am Fr. John Lyons, OMOV
 12:15 pm Nancy Butchy

Tues. 1 January, Octave Day of Christmas, I Class

8:30 am Bill Rhoads
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Jeff Morse

Wed. 2 January, Most Holy Name of Jesus, II Class

7:00 am Rev. Nicholas Duggan
 12:15 pm Barbara Graichen

Thurs. 3 January, Feria of Christmastide, IV Class

7:00 am Stop to Abortion
 6:30 pm Stop to Abortion

Fri. 4 January, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Widow, IV Class

7:00 am Fr. Stinson, FSSP
 12:15 pm Fr. Lyons
 6:30 pm Selene & Ian Convy

Sat. 5 January, First Saturday, III Class

7:00 am Vincia DeLeo & Co.
 9:00 am JLB & Co.

Sun. 6 January, Epiphany of the Lord, I Class

8:30 am Andrew Solari & Family
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Paul Nicolini

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

†Mark Trachera; †Fr. Lawrence Ryan (Sacramento Diocese);
 †Joseph Cortese; †Frank Farinha; †Cesar Chaves;
 †Msgr. Gerard Schons; †Rodolfo Servande; †Felice Johnson;
 †Jim Chun; †Aida Apaza; †Bessie Perez; †Robert Perez;
 †Richard Becker; †George Phillips; †Harriet Morton; †Nick Fransulich

Important Upcoming Dates

Jan. 1—Octave Day of Christmas (Sunday schedule)
 Jan. 5—Blessing of Epiphany Water
 Jan. 12—1st Communion Class
 Jan. 26—Walk for Life
 Jan. 27—St. Maximilian Kolbe—Saint of Auschwitz
 Feb. 2—Skating Party
 Feb. 13—Ash Wednesday
 Feb. 22—Chair of St. Peter—5th Anniversary of the Confraternity of St. Peter
 March 29—Good Friday
 March 31—Easter Sunday
 April 14—Confirmation
 May 4—May Procession
 May 11—First Holy Communion
 June 1—Ordinations in Nebraska
 June 16—22—Camp Sacred Heart

Let Us Make Good Use of Time

Time passes and does not return. God has assigned to each of us a definite time in which to fulfill His divine plan for our soul; we have only this time and shall have no more. Time ill spent is lost forever. Our life is made up of this uninterrupted, continual flow of time, which never reruns. In eternity, on the contrary, time will be no more; we shall be established forever in the degree of love which we have reached now, in time. If we have attained a high degree of love, we shall be fixed forever in that degree of love and glory; if we possess only a slight degree, that is all we shall have throughout eternity. No further progress will be possible when time has ended. “Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men.” “We must give every moment its full amount of love, and make each passing moment eternal, by giving it value for eternity.” This is the best way to use the time given us by God. Charity allows us to adhere to God’s will with submission and love and thus at the close of life we shall have realized God’s plan for our soul; we shall have reached the degree of love which God expects from each one of us and with which we shall love and glorify Him for all eternity.

The growth of charity depends upon meritorious acts, that is, good works done under the influence of charity. Every good act merits an increase of charity, which may be given to the soul at once or withheld until the end of life, according to whether the act had been performed with all the love of which the soul was capable, or whether, on the contrary, it was performed with less vigor, generosity, and carefulness than was possible at that moment. In the first case, the increase of charity comes like interest which is immediately accrued to the capital, and which then bears interest together with it. In the second case, it is like interest which is kept separate from the capital and hence does not increase with it, even though it remains the property of the one who has acquired it.

In order that the merit of our good works, that is, the increase of charity which we have merited by them, be granted immediately, it is necessary that these works be done with all the love possible, that is, with all the good will and generosity of which the soul is capable. Then it is as if the soul opens to receive the increase of love it has merited; and this is added at once to the capital of charity already possessed, immediately increasing its degree and intensity.

We have only the short day of this earthly life in which to grow in love, and if we wish to derive from it the greatest possible profit, we must overcome our natural inertia and carry out our good works “with our whole heart.” Then love will increase immeasurably and we shall be able to say to Our Lord like St. Therese of the Child Jesus: “Your love has grown with me and now it is an abyss, the depth of which I am unable to sound.” We must, then, make haste while we still have time, for “the night cometh when no man can work.”

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

Mary and Jesus

A few years ago I was visiting the Holy Land and made a visit to Nazareth. There is a big modern church in Nazareth that is supposed to be built over the site of Mary’s house. As I knelt in the crypt of the church it suddenly came home to me what a stupendous event the birth of Jesus really was. I believed in the Virgin Birth, and at this site, where the angel Gabriel visited the young virgin Mary, the full impact of the Incarnation came home to me in a real way.

The Virgin Birth is the doctrine that a simple and pure teenage girl from a village in Israel in the first century was made pregnant by a miracle. God Himself chose to come into the world through the doorway of Mary. However, we believe that Jesus is true God and true man. Mary was not just a channel or conduit for the God-man. If that were the case, Jesus would be a supernatural being but not a human being. Neither do we believe that God’s Son just took a human body from Mary, rather like an alien infesting a human body. Instead we believe that at the Annunciation the humanity of Mary was joined with the divinity of God to conceive Jesus. God was Jesus’ Father. Mary was Jesus’ mother. If this is really what we believe, then just as each of us is a composite of our mother and father’s genetic makeup, then Jesus was actually half Mary. Jesus shared her humanity in a literal and full way. This means he took not just a physical body like a shell but that he took on the fullness of everything human. It was this physical, mental, spiritual, and historic reality that hit me that day in Nazareth.

For centuries the Church has called Mary the “Mother of God” and this is what we mean—not that God in heaven has a mother or that Mary is some sort of goddess. Instead, since we believe that Jesus was God incarnate and Mary was His mother, we call her the Mother of God, or the God-bearer. Yet not only did Jesus take His humanity from Mary, but psychologists tell us how vitally important the months of gestation and the first few years of life are in the formation of the individual’s personality. The mothering we receive makes us the sort of person we are. The foundations of our personality are determined by how much we are loved and accepted by our mother. At a very basic and profound level we learn what love is from our mother. If this is the case, then Mary was more than a sort of surrogate Mother who simply carried somebody else’s child (in this case God’s). Mary was in that deep, permanent, and intimate relationship with Jesus from the very moment of his conception. Once all these facts about Jesus and Mary start to be considered, it becomes clear that Mary is a completely unique and wonderful human being. No other person is so close to Jesus. No other person was chosen to contribute humanity to God’s Son. No other person taught him the human lesson of how to love and be loved.

These simple implications are drawn logically from the fact of the Virgin Birth. It doesn’t take long to see how the first Christians soon began to honor Mary. If Jesus, as God’s Son, was the perfect expression of God’s love, and if He learned from His mother how to love and be loved, then His mother too must have had a special gift of grace so that Jesus might learn how to love and be loved perfectly. As they thought about the mystery of Jesus’ conception and birth, the first Christians also meditated on the event of Gabriel’s visit to Mary. When Mary said to the angel, “Let it be done to me according to your word,” the first Christian theologians saw a replay of the Garden of Eden. As Eve had rejected God’s will, Mary accepted God’s will. Because of this they began to refer to Mary as the second Eve. Just as St. Paul had referred to Jesus as the second Adam, so Irenaeus and Justin Martyr—writing in the early second century—referred to Mary as the second Eve. Irenaeus puts it like this: “Eve, by her disobedience, brought death upon herself and on all the human race: Mary, by her obedience, brought salvation. A little bit later Tertullian says the same thing: “Eve had believed the serpent: Mary believed Gabriel. That which the one destroyed by believing, the other, by believing, set straight. It is from this basic understanding of Mary’s identity that Catholics have drawn further logical conclusions about just who she was and how she cooperated in God’s plan of redemption.”

(“More Christianity” by Dwight Longenecker)

*The Priests of St. Stephen, the First Martyr
 Parish
 Wish you a
 Blessed & Happy Christmas*

*Thanks to all for the cards and gifts
 and
 Especially for your prayers.
 May God bless you abundantly!*

Save the Date!

St. Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz
Performed by Leonardo Defilippis
St. Stephen, the First Martyr
January 27, 2013—4:30 pm
Free—Will Offering appreciated to defer expenses

Walk for Life—January 26, 2013

Bus tickets are available. Remember: A FULL BUS IS A PAID FOR BUS. Contact Mike—916-335-4553 or Kathleen—916-204-9125.

Saint Francis Xavier Mission Trip 2013

After the great success of last summer’s trip to the Dominican Republic, we would like to announce our trip to Piura, Peru August 2-14, 2013. The trip is under the direction of seminarians from Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary and the chaplaincy of Fr. Rhone Lillard, F.S.S.P. Young men and women ages 16-21 can apply by visiting www.sfxmission.com. The registration deadline is January 21st. Space on trip is limited and will be granted on a first come first serve basis. Please also visit the website to learn more about the project and find out you can become an auxiliary member of our trip through your donations. Contact: SFXMission@gmail.com or (402) 882-0029.

Registration for 1st Communion Class

Registration is now open for 1st Communion classes which will begin January 12, 2013. Forms are available in the parish office or bookstore. Please sign up as soon as possible. The usual age for 1st Communion is 7 years old.

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

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.

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; Fred & Terry Bose; Ed Wedinsky; Ken Taylor, Carmen Brown, Peter Van Steyn, Elizabeth Van Steyn